



THE  
LIFE OF A SAILOR,

BY  
CAPTAIN CHAMIER.

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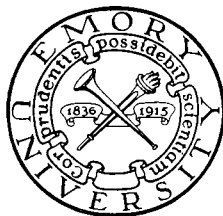
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# THE LIFE OF A SAILOR.

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## CHAPTER I.

I WAS born on the second of November 1796. It was a strange night; the very elements seemed to rejoice at the birth of one against whom the arrows of poverty and disappointment were in future to be directed. The rain fell in torrents; the wind howled against the casements; and at the moment when Saturn rose above the horizon, unseen from the clouds which darkened the night, and unthought of either by the doctor or the patient, I was born—and born in a caul! Old nurses declare that a child born in a caul is always fortunate. The inhabitants of Malta are equally credulous as to the chalk of St. Paul's Cave being a specific against shipwreck! but it has been my lot to see that idea falsified; for I know that many men belonging to the Lively (who were wrecked in St. Paul's Bay) had previously endeavoured to guard against the calamity, by stuffing their pockets and their chests with this valuable antidote to all maritime miseries.

The Irish on the north-west coast of Ireland have the same confidence in the wood of the true Cross.—Once, in pursuing my course, in a yacht from Loughswilly to Staffa, when the wind whistled over our heads, and the sea foamed over our bows, I remarked that we were perilously situated, as we had a lee-shore, a heavy sea, and strong breeze to contend against. “Your honour need not fear the devil himself just now,” said an Irish sailor, “for I’ve some of the *real wood* round my neck; and bad luck to

the wind, it may blow off the top of Instraholl lighthouse, but it cannot puff us ashore." Notwithstanding Paddy's faith, which exceeded my own, we were blown to leeward, just weathered Enishowen Head, and were wrecked on a ledge of rocks invitingly placed to catch the unwary and unskilful. In many Christian countries, the wood of the cross is a charm against murders, robberies, or the gallows; and much need has a sailor of an immensity of faith in the writings of an ancient author, who declared that the wood was so miraculously endowed, that it grew in proportion to the pieces cut from it; truly, so it must have done, for I have seen enough of it to build a line-of-battle ship.

But there are always some ingenious modes of counterbalancing good luck; for finding that, notwithstanding the caul, I certainly was not the fortunate youth, I ventured to request of my old and faithful nurse, Ann Young, to account for my being an exception to the general rule. It appears that, to settle some trifling wager in the nursery, I was weighed and measured—weighed like a shin of beef in a cook's balance, and measured by the lacerated forefinger of the lady's maid. It is decided by all the old women who assist mothers at their most joyfully painful moments, that nothing is so unlucky as either to weigh or measure a child; it is as bad as omitting to break through the bottom of an egg-shell after the contents are devoured. The Irish have the most positive proof that fairies ride in the unbroken vehicle, and amuse themselves by injuring their benefactors.

I am informed that in early life I displayed a great disposition to know the why and the wherefore of every thing that passed before my eyes; and it is reported, that when my old nurse Nanny—blessings on her good and faithful head!—one day entered the nursery, she discovered me sitting close to the fire, with my elbows on my knees and head in my hands, seriously saying—"Smoke, smoke, why do you go *up* the chimney?" The disposition here manifested to account for causes and effects was instantly made known to the family. It was allowed by all that smoke generally did go up a chimney, excepting when

first the fire was lighted. It was no use bothering me about rarefied air and heated atmosphere ; the inclination for knowledge was manifest, and I was regarded as a little above the general class of thick-skulled boys, who seem to defy even the rod, and who certainly have not the natural sagacity of dogs. My words and sayings were treasured with religious veneration, and an Epitaph on a Dove, written at the age of six years by the hope of the family, is still in existence. I would give it here, but I hate all attempts to puff myself into notice, and therefore will only assure the public that it is infinitely more poetical and more pathetic than Dr. Johnson's Lines on a Duck.

I was six years old when I was sent to Twyford, a school under the direction of the learned Dr. Stretch, the author of "The Beauties of History ;" — as good a soul, as kind a master, and as lenient a punisher as the most idle could pray for, or the most careless could request. I must not leave my home at so tender an age without giving a reason why I was sent to school, and why my poor mother parted with her own dear curly-pated boy. We lived in Clarges Street ; — a dull miserable street it is — it was — and always will be ; indeed it was very seldom that my brothers and myself could find a passer-by, on whom we could bestow a blessing, or a glass of water ; but one day in July, a tall well-powdered gentleman, who had removed his hat in consequence of the excessive heat, passed under our windows. My brother emptied the contents of a jug upon his coat, whilst I succeeded in squirting some water exactly upon his bald caput. He started like a red deer on beholding a man. My brother, right well knowing that no man would consent to be deluged with water without inquiring why he was honoured with a shower-bath unsolicited, made a speedy retreat into the back drawing-room, and, sitting down on the carpet, began to place a regiment of soldiers according to the old rule, before "threes right" was invented. I stood upon the first landing-place, awaiting the result. The gentleman knocked loud, and swore louder ; and I, foreseeing the storm, opened the window on the staircase, and most heroically leaped into the back yard, falling, as cats, boys,

and drunken men always do, upon my legs. I was not the least hurt ; so quietly awaited the time when I judged that the gentleman would have made his bow to my mother. Then did I set up a yell. I cried, and kicked, and howled, and roared, in no common style. My mother bowed the gentleman out before he had concluded the preface to his complaint. Nanny swore I was killed ; the footman ran for a surgeon ; and it was almost in vain that I declared myself unhurt. It was called an accident, and was supposed to have originated in my desire to imitate whatever I saw ; and thus, taking the hint from the window cleaners, I had commenced glass polishing, and had fallen out. My mother scolded and cried ; Nanny declared that I should be locked up in a dark cupboard ; and the infernal butler suggested that school was the best place for Master Frederic.

The hint was taken, and four days afterwards I was riding a boy, not very comfortably, for old Stretch was whipping the rider instead of the horse, merely because it had pleased me to pelt him with potatoes as he made his nightly round to see all was hushed and his fruit safe. I will do Stretch the justice to say that he was a very good prophet, for he often averred that my future life would be a chequered one ; that I should, like the Arab, be a stranger in the midst of my brethren ; and that nothing could save me but sending me to sea. In general, people are sent to sea to be got rid of : I was sent to be saved.

At school very little occurs worth remembering, excepting Latin and Greek, the which most boys endeavour to forget — and certainly they are very successful in this most laudable exertion ; but I cannot forget Twyford, for it was associated with many pleasant ideas, and unpleasant reminiscences.

I recollect, in particular, a midnight in August, when it was hot beyond the climate's regular heat ; the moon was bright, and the shadow of the old church was thrown in dim obscurity over the yew-tree. The school fronts the churchyard ; and the view of the grave-stones in the fore-ground of the picture naturally fixed my attention, and that of my school-fellows, more than the distant hills.

We were all awake, for few can sleep during oppressive heat ; each related in turn some anecdotes, all more or less burdened with a ghost, each story being the fanciful invention of the relator. Boy-like, I shook like a leaf whenever the boards creaked or a bed moved.

We were in the middle of a horrible anecdote when a scream was heard in the churchyard. We ran to the window, and just as quickly ran back to our beds, and buried our faces under the clothes. If, as is said, in the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom, I know that in the society of others there is courage ; so we agreed to satisfy our sight again, but no one was willing to be the first adventurer. Drawing ourselves up in a line, and borrowing courage from our numbers, we advanced to the window. There we beheld in painful reality the confirmation of half our stories. The sepulchre had yielded up its tenant ; and we saw, in a long white shroud, the figure of a human being stretched by the grave, in which, the preceding day, we had seen a body consigned to its parent earth. I stood riveted to the spot, my eyes fixed upon the spectre, and, lost in silent horror, was unconcerned at the nearest scene around me. One of the boys fainted ; the school was instantly in motion ; half-clad maids rushed into the room ; and I was awakened to the tumult by Doctor Stretch giving me a cut upon my seat of honour, which made me caper like a harlequin. But the pious and reverend doctor, when his eyes beheld the figure in the churchyard, was hardly more courageous than his pupils. The maids screamed, the boys became more frightened and unruly, the venerable doctor caught the alarm, and I verily believe the sexton might have buried us all without much opposition on our part.

Patience and true religion soon restored our pastor, and, rod in hand, he retired from our dormitory, calling on his spectre of a servant, misnamed a man, to attend him to the churchyard ; but as it would be more dignified to be preceded, he desired the servant to go and inquire of the ghost the reason of this midnight intrusion. He might as well have asked his servant to make him a steam-engine. John's legs were of no more use to him as implements of



locomotion, than a cow's tail is to supply the cow with food ; they shook under him like the metallic designator of a pocket-compass, while his face was as white and inanimate as a turnip. Luckily for the honour and courage of parson and servant, the spectre rose from its recumbent position, looked towards the moon, then at the church, again at the grave, covered its face with its hands, and departed in peace, not into the grave, but out of the church-yard.

It was afterwards discovered that the spectre was the widow of the dead man, who having, for a wonder, lived three years in a state of happiness with her husband, came to mourn, like the Ephesian dame, as she thought, unobserved, over the grave of the man who had been her husband, her protector, her friend. Nothing however could persuade me but that the spectre was a real, downright, undeniable ghost. The chances were equal between the affectionate wife, or the man's shadow, more especially as the lady took early consolation by a matrimonial alliance three months afterwards.

This scene did not make me the braver man. It gave me the first idea of fear ; and, God knows, the idea has often recurred. I say with Dr. Johnson, "that reason is against, but that all believe in, the existence of ghosts ;" and I am by no means prepared, especially after having read "the accredited ghost-stories," to deny explicitly my belief in the existence of such beings ; I only wish they would stay where they are, for I never heard of any good they did society in general by returning to haunt and annoy us.

I was removed from school to school until I was safely landed at a French seminary at Durham House, Chelsea. The master, who was a pert, fat, powdered tyrant, constantly amused himself in proving the hardness of my head, by beating it with a thick ruler. Here I learnt French after a fashion ; but being detected in all manner of mischief, I was sent home as an incorrigible devil, idle, mischievous, and unpromising — with evident *marks* of the Frenchman's displeasure. All the family agreed in one thing, and that was, that I should never do for a

parson. My father declared that none of his sons should idle away life in a red coat covered with gold-lace, like the Duchess of Gloucester's footmen, as an officer in the Guards; or loll against the posts in St. James's Street, with a hat like that of an Astrachan merchant. My mother objected to any trade, in which prohibition was included bankers, lawyers, fiddlers, &c.; and consequently I was condemned to the sea, to which I had some pretensions, as my grandfather was an admiral, and my uncle a half-pay lieutenant. Another offer was made to send me to India; and, of two evils, I imagined I chose the least, in giving my consent to become a defender of Albion, and a thing upon which to fit a midshipman's coat.

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## CHAPTER II.

As all parties resolved to send me to sea, my inclination to remain on shore, if I had any, was overruled, and I gave my consent with the indifference of a boy. The uniform dazzled my imagination; in it I paraded Grosvenor Place by daylight in the morning, to the no small gratification of myself, and the astonishment of the milk-maids and chimney-sweepers. I was introduced to my future captain, poor old Bathurst, who was afterwards killed at Navarino. He ran his short fingers through my hair, called me by my Christian name, and swore he saw a positive likeness to the great Lord Nelson.

The next day I went to exhibit myself and my uniform to my old schoolfellows. I walked up the yard in the front of Durham House with all the arrogance and all the self-importance of a porter at the Admiralty, who considers himself sufficiently condescending when he allows a poor half-starved, expecting lieutenant to write his name down for an interview with the magnanimous first lord, and who would see the poor devil buried in Pad-

dington churchyard before he would show him the way to the waiting-room. These vermin are as haughty as their superiors, and positively laugh at the idea of a complaint. This should be reformed; for it is hard to be at the mercy of an inferior, and be insulted in the bargain.

The boys crowded round me; my dirk was drawn and sheathed as often as that used by the learned monkey at Antwerp; my cocked-hat was fitted on the head of every boy in the school, and I paraded about in all the conscious pride of a drill-sergeant before his awkward squall. The French tyrant ridiculed the folly of sending such *children* to sea: his slaves were rung into the school-room, and I swore, as I turned my head towards the large iron gate, that if ever I caught the master, or any of his relations, in my power, I would be revenged for that word "*children*," and the many hard blows and little knowledge I had received for my father's money.

It was on the 4th of July that I stepped into my father's carriage. I tittered with joy, whilst the family were in tears at my departure. I thought only on glory and a star, they on affection and the probable last farewell. Of all the scenes in life, the parting with an affectionate son, when the parents are at an advanced age, is perhaps the most trying. Some who send their sons to India to fight their own way in the world, and who know that the eye gazes for the last time on the boy, that the last parting kiss is being imprinted, and that it is the last fond adieu, bear up against the loss, inspired by hope, although that hope is desperate. Mammon assists to veil the truth; the hope that he may be rich banishes the dull idea that, to the parent, the boy may be lost for ever. He may for some few years read of his success; but the prospect of the return to the parent, once again to be clasped in his arms—once more to hear the kind and welcome voice, and feel his cordial and endearing kiss, is hopeless and unavailing. The child is dead though living—and to him the parent exists, yet has passed away.

No sooner had I driven from the door, although my

father was with me, than I felt the coldness of desolation ; the dress ceased to please, my mind constantly recurred to home, and I felt at "each remove the lengthening chain." Then did I feel the force of Southey's beautiful words. — "The pain which is felt when we are first transplanted from our native soil, when the living branch is cut from the parent tree, is one of the most poignant which we have to endure through life. There are after griefs which wound more deeply, which leave behind them scars never to be effaced, which bruise the spirit, and sometimes break the heart ; but never do we feel so keenly the want of love, the necessity of being loved, and the sense of utter desertion, as when we first leave the haven of home, and are, as it were, pushed off upon the stream of life."

Alas ! too soon I felt it — too soon I had necessity to call to remembrance the kind affection of a mother, the eager solicitude of my sisters, and the ever ready, willing hand of my old and kind protecting nurse.

The ship was at Sheerness, or rather the "Little Nore." We drove to the Three Tuns, about as miserable a hole, in as swampy a place, as the Washington Arms at Savannah. Here we slept. The next morning, at ten o'clock, we found a boat waiting to convey us on board the *Salsette*, a six-and-thirty-gun frigate, my future destination. Having refreshed ourselves with breakfast, and despatched my chest by the yaul, I, the owner, with my father, followed in the captain's gig. They were just hoisting in my traps as I came along side. — "Hulloa !" said the first-lieutenant (seeing my chest marked No. 6. — a large, lumbering thing, in which my father had stowed his linen for an Indian voyage some years back), "Hulloa — No. 6. ! why, does this youngster fancy the ship was made for him ? Here, Mr. M'Queen," calling one of the master's mates, "strike this chest into the steerage for the present ; but it must go in the hold afterwards." Instead of the careful hands of the elegant butler or trim footman, a parcel of half-clad savages, with long tails like monkeys, only shipped a little higher up, seized hold of No. 6., and in a moment I lost sight of all my worldly

treasures, as it descended into the *hole*, as the first-lieutenant called it.

Captain Bathurst was on deck to receive his old friend, my father. I was noticed kindly ; undergoing at the same time a pretty severe inspection by my future companions. They laughed covertly, for laughing is not allowed on the quarter-deck, at my frightened appearance ; and being a slim, and, I have since been told, an elegantly-made youngster, it was wittily remarked that I should make a good “nipper” or “selvagee” upon emergencies ; but, on descending the hatchway, I heard myself christened “Fat Jack ;” for which cognomen I was indebted to about as ugly a midshipman as mother ever produced or father saw.

On descending the hatchway, I turned to view the main-deck. Ye gods, what a difference ! I had anticipated a kind of elegant house with guns in the windows ; an orderly set of men ; in short, I expected to find a species of Grosvenor Place, floating about like Noah’s ark. Here were the tars of England rolling about casks, without jackets, shoes, or stockings. On one side provisions were received on board ; at one port-hole coals, at another wood ; dirty women, the objects of sailors’ affections, with beer-cans in hand, were everywhere conspicuous ; the shrill whistle squeaked, and the voice of the boatswain and his mates rattled like thunder in my ears ; the deck was dirty, slippery, and wet ; the smells abominable ; the whole sight disgusting ; and when I remarked the slovenly attire of the midshipmen, dressed in shabby round jackets, glazed hats, no gloves, and some without shoes, I forgot all the glory of Nelson, all the pride of the navy, the terror of France, or the bulwark of Albion ; and, for nearly the first time in my life, and I wish I could say it was the last, took the handkerchief from my pocket, covered my face, and cried like the child I was. These were no tears of school-boy’s eyes, but tears of mortification and disappointment, fresh from a youngster’s heart.

The time slipped away imperceptibly, for now I dreaded the departure of my father. In consolation or love, Heavens ! how the joyful moments fly !—I dare

say the poor criminal who is to pay the forfeit of his life when St. Sepulchre's bells begin to announce the eighth hour, finds the time between his awakening and his execution flying rather too rapidly, and would fain arrest the wing of the enemy for one short moment. My father appeared not to have been on board a minute, and now he wished to be gone. He saw me placed under the protection of an older midshipman, and he faltered when he gave me his last blessing, and shook my hand with all the friendship and affection of a parent. I saw him leave the ship. Well do I remember leaning over the gun in the captain's cabin, my head nearly out of the port, crying with all the bitterness of a forsaken child,—surrounded by strangers, who regarded me only as “a necessary evil”—my ears assailed by uncouth words and irreligious cursing—no one to pity me, no one to alleviate my misery—alone in the world, and yet surrounded by it.

My boyish bewailing was interrupted by the entrance of the captain, who consigned me to the care of the older midshipman; and I was walked off under the command of my new protector, to the finest school for aristocratic pride and delicate stomachs—a midshipman's berth. I was ushered into the larboard berth thus:—“Here, my lads, is another messmate; rather *green* at present, but as thin as our pig, and as sharp as a razor.”—“What? another!” roared a ruddy-faced midshipman of about eighteen; “he must stow himself away, for we are chock-a-block here.” It was noon, at which time the men and midshipmen dine, and consequently I found my companions at their scanty meal. A dirty tablecloth, which had the marks of the boys' fingers and the gentlemen's hands, covered the table. It had performed both offices of towel and tablecloth since Sunday. A piece of half-roasted beef—the gravy chilled into a solid, some potatoes in their jackets, and biscuit in a japanned basket, with some very questionable beer, formed the comestibles. The berth was about ten feet long by eight broad; a fastened seat, under which were lockers, was built round the bulk-head; and the table, a fixture from sea lashings, was of that comfortable size that a man might reach

across it without any particular elongation of the arm. A dirty-looking lad, without shoes or stockings, dressed in a loose pair of inexpressibles, fitting tight round the hips, a checked shirt, with the sleeves turned up to the elbows—his face as black as a sweep's, and his hands as dirty as a coalheaver's, was leaning against the locker, and acted in the dignified capacity of midshipman's boy. The time of these poor devils is so fully engrossed, that it has been held by good judges one of the most difficult points to determine which is the most worthy of compassion, a hackney coach-horse, a pedlar's donkey, or a midshipman's boy: for my own part, I always gave it as my opinion, which I shall not now retract, that a midshipman's boy in a frigate, having about fourteen masters and no assistant, is about as cursed a situation as the vengeance of man could suggest—a *galley* slave he is in every sense of the word. He was as slim and as flexible as an eel, and not very likely to become as fat as the Norfolk lady's servant, who had left his mistress a kind of undefined shadow, and who three months afterwards was found in London as fat as a duchess's coachman, or a boxer become landlord in a public-house.

"Ah, John," quoth the lady, "I am glad to see you: why, you are looking quite fat and rosy."

"Yes, ma'am," said the sawny-looking lout, "I have got a main good place now; I chews all the meat they puts in the patties in that pastry-cook's shop there; that's what I does, ma'am; and so I swallows it now and then, and gets right plump and hearty." Had poor Smith, our boy, masticated all the leavings of our hungry crew, it would not have increased his rotundity.

"Well, I say, youngster," said a dirty-looking messmate, "it's no use your piping your eye now; so what will you have? Come, speak out like a man; why, you have got a long-tailed coat on; the *sail-maker* will soon alter the cut of your jib."

I answered in a trembling voice, that I would take a glass of water; upon which I was saluted with a loud laugh, and the boy forthwith began to pour out some dingy-looking liquid in a tea-cup.

"Here, you rascal!" cried one; "I asked you for it before that youngster: hand it here, for I must be off, and relieve the deck."

A cup of water was then handed to me; it was the bitterest drop pride ever sipped. Oh! could I then have recalled my choice of a profession, the world would have been too poor to liquidate the debt.

In those days in the navy, before we had been polished by the society of females, or enjoyed the benefits of peace, the dinner-service in a midshipman's berth were not quite so costly as the nobleman's. Glass, a brittle material, and one which shows dirt both in the liquid and on its sides, was too expensive and too easily expended to be much used in the navy. Cups would answer their purpose, and therefore cups were used. The soup-tureen, a heavy, lumbering piece of block-tin, pounded into shape, was, for want of a ladle, emptied with an everlasting tea-cup; the knives were invariably black, both on the handles and on the blades; and the forks were wiped in the tablecloth by the persons about to use them, and who, to save eating more than was requisite of actual dirt, always plunged them through the tablecloth to clean between the prongs. Of course, as only one tablecloth was used during the week, on the Saturday it was voted always dirty enough to be put in a bag, to await its ablution. The rest of the furniture was not much cleaner: now and then an empty bottle served as a candlestick; and I have known both a shoe and a quadrant-case used as a soup-plate. The sides of the berth were adorned with dirks; and cocked-hats, belonging to no particular member of the community, were placed *à cheval*, like the little wooden god Thor at Upsala, on a tenpenny-nail.

It was in a habitation like this, "a prison," as Dr. Johnson says, "with the chance of being drowned," and with only one plank between man and eternity, that the sons of the highest noblemen were placed; and here, instead of the well-powdered lackey, the assiduous servant, or the eager attendant, he found but one almost shirtless boy to attend upon fourteen aspiring heroes—heroes who commanded by right of years and strength, and not by



birth. The business of the toilet, instead of being assisted by a clear light from a window, shining on a French looking-glass, and comfortable apparatus, was finished in the dark, on his own chest in the steerage, the watch below cleaning the decks at the moment; and his shoes, even if he had the good fortune to keep a servant, in the shape of a marine, were covered with the pulverised holy-stone or lower deck-sand. He dressed and undressed in public; the basin was invariably of pewter; and the wet towels, dirty head-brush, &c. were, after use, deposited in his chest, which consequently produced, from the lack of air, a very disagreeable smell. A hammock served as a bed, and so closely were we all stowed in the war, that the side of one hammock always touched that of another; fourteen inches being declared quite sufficient space for one tired midshipman to sleep in.

How my first evening went I have, thank God, quite forgotten. I only remember that, at about nine o'clock, Mr. M'Queen stuck a large fork in the table; instantly all the youngsters retired to bed. I remained, not understanding the hint; but I was shortly ordered to "obey signals and be off." I was conducted to my hammock; and never shall I forget my first sensations at undressing before company. I turned round like a lady in a squall, to avoid showing my legs; which could scarcely be dignified by that name at my tender age. At last I was unrigged, as the sailors say, and there I might have stood shivering and shaking like a dog in a wet sack, until this time, had not my friend taken me, like a child, in his arms, and placed me fair and square in my hammock. In endeavouring to get between the clothes I lost my balance, and out I went on the other side. I was instantly seized by a *lady*, who had some right to be in that part of the ship from her acquaintance with one of the midshipmen; placed properly in bed, tucked up, so as to defy balancing improperly; had a kiss, which savoured much of rum; and then was left, not in the dark, or entirely to my own reflections.

## CHAPTER III.

THINGS were very different in the navy at the period under consideration, than they are now. I doubt much if, in 1809, there could be a greater change in a boy's life, than being launched from his comfortable home at thirteen years of age into the stormy elements of a midshipman's berth; for in those days the company was not quite so select as at present; people of all sorts and all descriptions became midshipmen. A shoemaker who had a long outstanding bill against a captain, cancelled the bill and the obligation, by having his son placed on the quarter-deck; hence some of the very objectionable characters, who have in after life so completely disgraced the navy; and men in good society too, who have accidentally met some of these intruders, have formed their ideas of the whole profession by the blundering remarks of a hatter's son, and by the awkward demeanour of a tinker's brat. The navy now, as I once heard a very impertinent young dandy soldier remark, is fast approximating to civilisation; for the Admiralty, with a very laudable resolution, has prohibited the entrance of any young man as a midshipman who has not its sanction for his admittance. In former days the navy was a hard service; a midshipman was a kind of water-dog, to fetch and carry; a lieutenant was somebody, and a captain a king—an absolute monarch, who made war or peace, enacted laws for his kingdom, punished the aggressor, or reprimanded the offender. The march of intellect, and the improved state of society on board, has altered all this; captains are no longer kings, but very limited rulers; lieutenants can hardly be called the aristocracy of midshipmen; but midshipmen have become gentlemen. Of late years, I have known one of the latter challenge his superior officer: had this occurred in 1809, I know right well what would have become of the refractory young gentleman. The navy has certainly wonderfully improved since the peace: now a midshipman's berth

may hear the sound of a champagne bottle ; glass is in general use ; plate is requisite. I have seen the servant in livery ! (O for the ghost of poor Smith ! ) the tablecloth is changed twice or three times a week ; and some young midshipmen of the guard-ships at Plymouth and Portsmouth not unfrequently cross the quarter-deck early in the morning, in top-boots and a piece of pink, on their way to join the hunt. They live like and are gentlemen : now no longer that disgraceful intercourse is permitted on board which depraved the minds of the younger, and ruined the health of the elder midshipmen ; and if the present generation are not such rough practical seamen as the past race, they are more enlightened officers ; their education is better attended to, and the suavity of the gentleman is now distinguished from the self-sufficient boisterous tyranny of the uneducated seaman.

I awoke from a sound sleep to witness a novel scene—

“ Seven bells, sir,” said a marine, who had been dubbed my servant.—“ What bells ? ” said I.

“ Seven, sir.—You must turn out ; the hammocks are piped up, and the master-at-arms is coming round ; here is your hammock-man waiting, sir.”

“ Well,” said I, “ go out of the room, and I’ll get up.”

I was saved much trouble, for the marine threw off the coverings, and lifted me out in a most improper state of nudity. It was rather a different business from a toilet on shore. I had to sit down on my own chest, and wash thereon ; the bright pewter basin only showed me more distinctly the dirty water in which I was performing the necessary ablution. But the breakfast—such stuff to call cocoa, and such iron to call biscuit—I never wish to see again as long as I live.

The war was a stirring time ; ships were not allowed to remain long in harbour ; and two days after I joined, the *Salsette* was under weigh for the Downs, and there we found the fleet destined for the attack on Flushing. My first feelings of disgust gave way when the ship was under weigh. To be sure, I was pushed about from place to place, being like little pigs, children, and old women, exactly where I should not have been. When we an-

chored, I began, practical seaman-like, to go aloft. The first three or four ratlines I managed without much fear, but after that I clung to the shrouds with the tenacity of death and a doctor to a consumptive patient: by degrees the difficulty vanished, like all difficulties in life which are fearlessly opposed; it is apprehension in the perspective. The traveller, who sees the road winding over an apparently steep and almost inaccessible hill, is astonished, as he progresses towards the place, to find the mountain dwindle to a hillock; and death, the greatest of all evils, which robs us of our friend, and forms a chasm, we believe, never to be obliterated, is superseded by the general consolers, Time, who fills up the vacuum, and surmounts the difficulty.

A general bustle gives general animation and courage. I soon forgot home and comfort, and, boy-like, was only alive to the surrounding scene. I had gained courage by the applause of my messmates; I was a better sailor than half on board, for I never experienced sea-sickness. My first effort aloft was the prelude to a first essay of another kind.

"Well done, youngster!" said one of the midshipmen; "why, you are as active as a monkey! Here, my lad, be a sailor at once, and take a glass of grog." I knew no more what grog was composed of than a Congo negro does of the component parts of Warren's blacking. I did as I was told, for I soon learnt to obey, and swallowed the contents of a large cup—right stiff, half-and-half rum and water. I soon became as brave as a lion, talked of all the feats I had performed, and promised myself the immortality of a Nelson. By degrees I found the difficulty of articulation increase; the words hung upon the lips, and only faltered into speech. Being perfectly independent, I resolved to go on deck; but making rather a bad slant, I fell down the cockpit, and forthwith commenced, after a howl for an overture, a pretty decided cry of murder. It was Sunday, and Captain Bathurst was at dinner in the gun-room with the officers. Murder is a very unusual sound on board a ship. I only remember to have heard it once, and then it was "Killing no murder." An Irish

man called out, having been struck by a splinter, "Oh . blood and turf, I am murdered outright ; I'm killed, to be sure I am."

No sooner did I cry out the ominous word, than I had a full levee of attendants. The surgeon was instantly on the spot, and was informed that I had tumbled down the hatchway. At one glance of his accustomed eye, he saw the reason of my fall, and he reported that I had made a very pretty beginning, and was as drunk as a lord. When I awoke, I found myself in my hammock, sick as a dog, with my head turning round like a spinning-jenny. From that day to this I have never been in so disgraceful a state. I had a lecture the next morning, and was pardoned.

We landed the 28th regiment in our boats on the island of Tholen. The French were drawn up on a rising ground, and seemed resolved to dispute the possession of the beach. I was ordered to land Major Brown in the captain's gig, and to return, having done so, to a prize we had taken, and in which some of the 28th had been placed previously to disembarking.

On nearing the shore, the enemy commenced firing, and I commenced shivering. Major Brown cheered on the crew, which I, parrot-like, repeated ; " Bravo, my boys ! stretch out." The boats kept in a pretty regular line ; but, owing to the shoal, they grounded at some distance from the beach ; the gallant fellows instantly jumped overboard, formed in the water, and with a loud cheer, charged the French regiment over the bank. It did not occur to me as by any means requisite to follow the soldiers. I had landed my cargo, and was expressing my wish to go back as ordered, but the crew turned a deaf ear to my command ; they were resolved to see the fight ; and in spite of the balls which came whistling and whizzing over their heads, these blockheads were determined to stand a chance of being shot, by putting their skulls above the bank. Fortunately for my honour, the charge settled the business ; the French retreated, and our heroes advancing at a steady but quick pace, were soon out of sight : I returned, covered with laurels, having smelt powder and heard ball.

The captain duly appreciated my valour, and patted me on the back. "There," said he, "you are fairly a sailor now ; been drunk, been aloft, and been in action. Take your hands out of your pockets, youngster, or I shall order the sailmaker to stitch them up."

As I said before, a midshipman in those days was a dog to fetch and carry ; so the next morning I was sent on shore to buy milk for the captain's breakfast. On our approaching the beach, I remarked a soldier walking as a sentinel, which attracted my notice ; the crew, ever ready for schnaps, laughed at the idea of an enemy. We landed, bought the milk, and were progressing out of the creek, when my friend with the musket desired us in the purest French to land again, or he should fire at us. We were close to him, and I, calling in the aid of the Durham House tyrant, answered, that "there must be some mistake on his part."

"Not at all," said he, and began to get ready for action.

By this time we were clear of the creek, but still too close to be pleasant. The fellow took a steady aim and fired ; the ball passed over my head, which I took the liberty of bobbing as low as I could, and fell harmless in the water ; the crew did not require to be told to "stretch out," or "give way," terms, the meaning of which is to "row harder." They rowed hard enough then. The captain's steward steered the boat, keeping out of the line between the Salsette and the enemy. The French guard, on hearing the musket, came down to enjoy some shooting, and began to give the most unequivocal signs of their very unfriendly disposition, for the bowman got a slight graze from the first volley. There is nothing like coolness in danger ; and so, to show how little I thought of the matter, I lay down in the stern-sheets of the boat, merely because I knew that a boat could be propelled faster through the water if the weight was below the surface, and thus my placing myself out of danger was not the consequence of fear, but the result of knowledge : The officer of the deck on board seeing our danger, reported it ; and an eighteen-pound shot, which struck the bank close to the French guard, and covered them with

dirt, settled the business. I got safely on board, thinking (and no doubt, improperly, for midshipmen are not paid for thinking,) that, although the captain's tea might not be quite so good without milk, I should be obliged to him if he would find some youngster, fonder of fighting than myself, to go for it the next time.

It is here of little use to show the egregious errors of the Flushing expedition. Had the fleet advanced to Antwerp, there were not one hundred soldiers left to protect the town. The banks of the river are so low, that no battery could have been of much avail; and the ships, magazine stores, &c., of the city, would have amply repaid the little trouble of sounding the river. But no! differences of opinion prevailed: true it was,

Lord Chatham with his sword drawn  
Was waiting for Sir Richard Stra'han;  
Sir Richard — longing to be at 'em,  
Was waiting for the Earl of Chatham.

On visiting Antwerp some few months ago, I chanced to converse with the gentleman who commanded the Burgher guard upon that occasion: he told me that only one opinion prevailed about our expedition, and that was, that we were all mad; he paid us an equally bad compliment about our intelligence, and our spies. — Enough of this; we bungled the business most completely; lost thousands of brave men; and I never received one farthing of prize money for all my risks, and all my great exertions.

The Salsette was ordered to the Mediterranean. We now anchored a second time in the Downs, and I was sent home for a day or two, with orders to join the ship at Portsmouth. It was quite astonishing the change six months had worked in me: before I left home, boiled mutton did not *agree* with me; plain water was unwholesome; pork was too rich, and veal not sufficiently nutritious. A midshipman's berth had completely conquered all fastidious antipathies, for I had eaten pork with the skin on, with bristles as long as a Russian's beard, and as thick set as a scrubbing-brush. When I came to the delights of cleanliness again — when, instead of being kicked

about like a football, I found myself caressed and flattered, it occurred to me that I had had quite enough of fighting and seafaring, and I began to think how I could mention to my father, that if it were all the same to him, I would just as soon lodge in Grosvenor Place, as serve on board the *Salsette*. I disclosed this rising feeling to one of my sisters: she took my arm, praised the valour I had shown, read me a part of *Nelson's Life*, assured me that difficulties were easily overcome by perseverance; and so completely did she humbug me with honour and glory, merit rewarded, England — home — beauty, all shouting the praise of the navy — that I put the best face I could upon the vile profession I had chosen, curtailed my stock of clothes (for when I first embarked, I had enough for a director's son bound to China), reduced chest, No. 6, to a more convenient size, remodelled my coat by cutting off the skirts, once again took leave of my family, embarked with my old captain, and, with as much content as I could muster, saw the snowy cliffs of the Isle of Wight fade in the distance.

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## CHAPTER IV

THE breeze which blew us from our native shores soon freshened into a gale; the frigate surged over the sea, and rolled her lumbering sides in the water, as she skimmed over the wave. I really do not know any sight more magnificent than a ship in a heavy gale of wind during a cloudy night, when the moon is occasionally shaded from the view — the murkiness of the time perceptible for the moment, whilst the white foam dashed against the side, flies over the reeling vessel — the moon, like a gleam of hope to an unfortunate man, brightening the scene only to leave it in twofold darkness.

We had General C. and his lovely family on board: he was appointed governor of Gibraltar, and we were destined



to convey him to his future command, and death-place. "There is a tide in the affairs of man, which, taken at the flood, leads on to glory." I had an opportunity of trying the tide in consequence of the following adventure. The gale had suddenly shifted, and we were "hove-to," under a close-reefed main-topsail: there she rolled and rolled, the sea bellowed past her, and the foam flew over her. It was about 2 P. M.; the Miss C.'s were on deck, as was the general. The ship was on the larboard-tack, and the elegant fairy figure of Caroline was seen to windward, clinging to the main-sheet cavil, as the ship surged over to leeward. There are times in a gale of wind, and generally before the arrival of a heavy sea, that the ship is for a moment relieved from her pendulum motion, and during this moment the fair Caroline relinquished her hold. The heavy sea struck the ship, and before the young lady could regain her grasp she was hurried from her place of security. I was standing on the weather-side of the quarter-deck, close to the wheel, and instantly perceived her perilous situation: if she had continued falling to leeward as she had begun to do, she must have fallen through the gun-room skylights, and, in all probability, met her death on the very table round which the officers were assembled at dinner. With a courage I never knew I possessed, I sprung from my place, caught her in my arms, and we both fell by the capstan. My legs hung over the skylights, but, saving a slight bruise, neither of us was hurt. The young lady was recovered in a second.

The general, who had seen the affair, shook me by the hand, and, with the feeling of a father glowing on his countenance, said, "Well done, youngster, well done; I never shall forget how much I am indebted to you." It was the story of the lion and the mouse verified. Weak, young, and only half-courageous that I was, I certainly saved her life, or worse, her fractured limbs. She looked at me: by Allah! young as I was, the glance of acknowledgment which kindled in her large blue eye, the expressive thanks she looked, gave me a sensation I certainly had never previously experienced. I had often been thanked and caressed by my younger sister, for we drew

more kindly together, from the similitude of our features and tempers ; I felt a glow of gratitude and regard for every kind word which fell from her friendly and affectionate lips ; but I never felt the strange sensations occasioned by the moist glance of Caroline's eyes.

We anchored at Gibraltar ; and the day afterwards I took up my quarters at the convent, the government residence of the Rock. There, relieved from the bustle and the duty of the ship, my time my own, pleasure my object, and Caroline my companion, I succeeded in bringing myself to believe that there is no life so gay, or so much to be envied, as that of a sailor. I will here record my grateful thanks for all the kindness I received from that excellent family. General C. to the last day of his life, remembered me, and amply rewarded me by his kind and generous behaviour. Poor Caroline ! "uneasy rests the head which wears a crown ;" and the same may often be applied to a coronet ; for from the time the coronet added a bright gem to its attractions by Caroline's acceptance of it, from that moment her happiness ceased, and her life began to wane. She is dead : she died the Countess R——. May her future existence recompense her earthly miseries as a peeress !

We were destined for Malta, and sailed as soon as we refitted. A boat belonging to us, owing to the want of attention in the cockswain, had been upset in some of those furious white squalls which rush down the sides of the Rock, and in their vehemence create the whirlwinds, so dangerous to boats sailing within the bay. Ships fly round their anchors, and snap them or the cable by the jerk : the midshipman, who wrote to his mother, that in weighing anchor from the Red Sea they had brought up one of Pharaoh's chariot-wheels, is perhaps not much entitled to credit ; but any man may believe, that in Gibraltar it is by no means an uncommon occurrence to weigh another ship's anchor with your own.

The upsetting the boat occasioned the loss of a man's life ; and it became requisite that some example should be made, in order to keep all awake and attentive to their respective duties. Thursday came, black Thursday ; the

men were mustered at divisions, and the carpenters ordered to "rig the gratings;" that is, to fasten two gratings in such a manner, that the culprit stands upon one, to which his feet are fastened, and leans against the other, to which his hands are secured. The officers appeared in their cocked hats and side-arms; the marines were "under arms;" and the ship's company formed on the opposite side of the deck. Near the gratings was the master-at-arms, with his sword drawn. The culprit stood by him; then the executioners, in the shape of the boatswain and his mates, completed the line. The arrangements being made, the first-lieutenant went below to report the same to the captain: the most perfect silence was maintained. No one can look at all the preparations for punishment without some awkward twitches of the heart.

The captain came on deck immediately. There was no doubt that the careless behaviour of the cockswain had occasioned the loss of his messmate's life; and to pass over without punishment such a neglect, would have been as culpable a dereliction of duty in the captain as in the cockswain. The prisoner was called, and desired to stand forward. Poor old Bathurst, in his calmest of moods, when freed from nervous agitation, never spoke quite so fluently or so eloquently as the late Mr. Canning; and now in the performance of a duty he most cordially abhorred, (in general with every man in the navy, when *obliged* to inflict so disgraceful a punishment,) his voice faltered, and he stuttered and stammered out the following remarks—a kind of overture to the serious opera about to follow: "My man, I—I am really sorry, very sorry, I may say exceedingly sorry, to see you brought here. You have neglected your duty; and it—it—it—it is my duty, that is, I should be neglecting my duty, if—if—if I overlooked, or, that is, if I forgot my duty, by not punishing you, as an example to the rest of the ship's company. Strip!"

The culprit, without saying a word, began undressing, leaving his back only bare; and was then, when the captain gave the word, "Seize him up!" seized up accordingly, the master-at-arms placing the shirt over the

prisoner's shoulders, and for the moment covering the back. An article of war was then read, relative to the punishment to be inflicted on any man who "negligently performs his duty." This being done, we put on our hats, which had been doffed during the reading of the above article: the captain pronounced the order, "Give him a dozen." There was an awful stillness; I felt the flesh creep upon my bones, and I shivered and shook like a dog in a wet sack. All eyes were directed towards the prisoner, who looked over his shoulder at the preparations of the boatswain's mate to inflict the dozen: the latter drew his fingers through the tails of the cat, ultimately holding the nine ends in his left hand, as the right was raised to inflict the lash. They fell with a whizzing sound as they passed through the air, and left behind the reddened mark of sudden inflammation. I ejaculated a sudden and involuntary "Oh!" and burst into tears; for which "Oh!" I received from the kind-hearted M<sup>c</sup>Queen a pull on the ears, which kept up the irritation in my eyes; and, for fear I might too hastily recover, he followed it with a box, which created a singing like a peal of a triple bob-major. To hinder my sobs, I covered my eyes; and when I again looked, the back bore ample testimony as to the strength of the arm and the cut of the lash.

At the conclusion of the dozen, I heard the unwilling order, "Another boatswain's mate!" The fresh executioner pulled off his coat, and planted himself firmly on his feet preparatory to commencement. He was a strong man, and the prisoner, by his piteous look, seemed to anticipate a greater proportion of pain. Until then he had not let one word escape him; with unflinching coolness, and sullen silence, he had borne his punishment. On the first cut of his new and merciless punisher, he writhed his back in acknowledgment of the pain; the second stripe was followed by a sigh; the third by an ejaculation; and the fourth produced an expression of hope of pardon. At the conclusion of the dozen, this was granted, and the prisoner released. The first-lieutenant gave the word "Pipe down;" the gratings were unrigged, the prisoner sent aft, and the ordinary duty of the ship continued.

This is a true picture, not the least exaggerated or shaded, of a punishment on board a man-of-war — a lenient punishment I admit; for Captain Bathurst was so excellent and kind a man, that he could not have inflicted one of great severity.

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## CHAPTER V.

A STRANGE sail right a-head. It was a fine clear morning, the sea as blue as a summer sky; the Salsette off the Island of Maretimo mine was the morning watch, and it was just daylight. We had a breeze, a light one, barely sufficient to move our tea-kettle of a vessel at the rate of a knot and a half an hour. The stranger was becalmed about five miles from the island. From divers exertions made by her, such as towing with the only boat she had, rowing with her only sweep, and endeavouring to near the land, we were satisfied that she was an enemy. I was in raptures at the thought of capturing our first prize on the sea. Our Dutch captures were broad-sterned dodgers — river-fish floating down, not worthy of being reckoned as ocean gifts, the God-sends of sailors and avaricious agents.

Fortune, what a fickle devil art thou! To those who have much, thou givest more, and withholdest from the almost starving the little they require. When within about three miles of the shore, a breeze sprung up off the land, and obliged the chase to “beat up” for her shelter: at that moment we took a sea breeze, and ran right down upon her: the shot from the long bow gun passed over her, and the tricoloured flag was shown and hauled down immediately. We neared her fast, and saw her boat push from the vessel, and make towards the shore. Our grape-shot fell like hail around her; but the crew clung to their oars, and pulled hard to avoid a prison. In vain we despatched the gig with two marines to fire at the poor wretches; they escaped, and we took possession of a deserted prize.

There are many very gratifying moments in life ; the eliciting of acknowledged love from the lips of youth and beauty — the first delicious sip of rich Madeira at dinner — the long draught of sangoree during the oppression of the sun in the West Indies — a rich uncle's *unfortunate* death — the secret pleasure of abusing a friend — the curious feeling of satisfaction when any man fails in his object — having a once rich relation a beggar at one's fee : — humbled pride in others — or the secret, undefinable gratification of piquing and soothing the girl we love — not to mention the long, long kiss of youth. But to a sailor, "prize-money" is as sweet as "revenge in woman ;" and that is saying as much for the feeling, as even Lord Byron could say, from whom I borrow the simile. At the moment of the capture I would not have changed my profession for any other in the world. Oh, the joy of legally mistaking the *meum et tuum* — the immense gratification of converting another man's property to our own use — the having a licence to rob and to murder — it's quite delightful ! and quite unknown to your sober, virtuous people on shore, who talk of morality and honesty, as if the whole world acknowledged their existence.

My share was small, of course ; but I heard with gratification the calculations of her worth, and the probable proportions of each. "Why, youngster," said one, "you will make a fortune here ; but wait awhile, prizes are not always taken quite so easily." He was a true retailer of a well-known fact, and that evening very nearly saw his prophecy fulfilled.

And now for a scene arising from a ship's company not being in good discipline, and the ship being, like a midshipman's chest, everything at top, and nothing at hand. We had parted with the prize, having sent her to Malta, the frigate making sail in chase of another vessel to windward. She very shortly got away from us, and in the evening we bore up for Malta, with a strong, and, of course, favourable breeze. It was about ten o'clock ; the officer of the watch talking very jollily, and very improperly, with the marine officer ; the look-out man on the gangway, bobbing his head, like a fisherman's float ; the guardian on

the quarter, under the lee of the hammock-netting; and the careful watch on the bow, sitting down on the fore-castle; when, whiz came a shot right across our bows, followed by another, which went through the foresail. — “Hulloa! what the devil do you call this?” said the marine officer; “is it a three-decker or a gun-boat?” — “Beat to quarters,” roared the officer of the watch; the drummer being snug enough in his hammock. — “Pipe the hammocks up,” said the first-lieutenant, who had jumped up the hatchway like a lamplighter. Smack came another shot over the stern. “Where is the signal-man with the lanterns?” said the captain. — “Run, youngster, and tell the purser to have the fighting lights ready — up with the fire-screens, carpenters, — clear away the guns here.” — “Watch and *idlers*, shorten sail!” said the first-lieutenant. “Watch below, bring the hammocks up!”

The British blood was up; confusion, from want of proper discipline, prevailed; the top-gallant sails were handed (that is, furlled), the ship brought to the wind, and the next shot was a wide one of the mark. “Send the marines aft with their muskets,” said Bathurst. He was a fighter, a real good one at that; and if he stammered in his speech, he never wavered in his resolution when his enemy was near; a braver man never trod a quarter-deck. “Where — where — where is the signal-man (as it ’tis en)? Why, you scoundrel, you (as it ’twas en), don’t you hoist the s—s—signal when you re t—t—to—told? (as it ’tis en.)” Independently of poor Bathurst’s natural infirmity, he could not help saying “’tis en — ’twas en” at the end of every two words; and he was always called “old ’tis and ’twas en,” as long as I can remember him. This was the effect of hurry in expression, and was laughable to the highest degree in serious discourse.

Up went the lanterns; but, as Dr. Johnson says, “Whatever is done in a hurry, is naturally done badly;” so we found, for we got dangling a parcel of lights no more like the signal than an illuminated star at Vauxhall. Up went some lanterns from the stranger; but, as she was end-on, we could not make out her signal, nor ascertain whether she was a ship, or brig, or zebeck. She

looked large in the haze of the night; and I am willing to admit that I bobbed my head like a mandarin, or like one of the wag-jaw women carried about by the Italian boys, whenever she fired. She was now getting too close to be pleasant; we were, after a fashion, clear for quarters. Each ship had mistaken the signal, and, of course, we believed her to be an enemy, and she paid us the same compliment. The night was confoundedly dark, and I kept tumbling over handspikes and crowbars, and breaking my shins and toes over the loose shot. The captain was standing abaft, trumpet in hand, as cool as a cucumber. He desired the marines to treat our adversary with a few small-shot. This rather astonished our opponent, who little dreamt he had got hold of a frigate; and, as we fired one or two of the main-deck guns, she yawed a little, and we discovered she was a brig.

"I've got you s—s—snug enough, my b—b—boy!" said the captain. "Avast firing on the main-deck; why, we shall *damage* her."—"Shall I just fire this thirty-two pounder, your honour?" said an Irish captain of a quarter-deck gun.—"Bad luck to me if I don't make them blink on board!"—"Silence! fore and aft," roared the first-lieutenant.—"Ho! the brig, ahoy!" bellowed the captain, disguising the words as much as possible.—"What brig is that?"—"What ship is that?" replied a gruff voice. "This is his Majesty's ship the *Salsette*."—"This is his Majesty's sloop the *Monkey*."—"The devil it is!" said the first-lieutenant. "Heave-to, sir, and come on board directly," said the captain, in a most officer-like manner, "and haul that signal down!" I just heard the answer, "Why, you have got the wrong signal up, sir!"—"The devil we have!" said old Bathurst, and forthwith pulled some papers out of his pocket, asked the day of the month, looked for some moments, and then shuffling the private signals away, muttered, "C—c—curse the s—s—signals! I have b—b—bothered my b—b—brain so confoundedly! But I never could understand the business." The *Monkey* captain came on board; all was explained to the satisfaction of both parties. We had been **wrong** in one respect, and he in another; for, after making



us out to be a ship, and after we had hove-to, instead of firing, he ought to have offered the signal so that we could see it; as he hoisted it, the sails entirely obscured the lights, and might just as well have been in the boat-swain's store-room.

One word of advice to all captains, commanders, and lieutenants commanding — always look out the private signal before you go to bed, and place it under your pillow; destroy it the next morning, or desire the officer of the watch, when he calls you at daylight, to remind you that the signal is not destroyed. I have been suddenly roused, and been bothered like poor Bathurst, for five or ten minutes; in fact, the knowledge that you are prepared in a moment makes the comfort of the cot not a little enhanced. The guns were soon secured, the hammocks piped down, magazine locked up, and keys returned to the first-lieutenant's cabin — the watch called, and I in bed.

A few days afterwards we arrived, without further occurrences, in Malta harbour. I was particularly struck with the strength of the fortifications, and the extremely curious appearance of the town of Valetta. The bells of every church in the town were ringing; a disagreeable noise which continues almost night and day. Before we were near the anchorage, the boats belonging to the venders of fruit were alongside. There was the cool water-melon, fine in appearance, a mere mass to melt into liquid when touched by the hand or the mouth, — all outside show, like a marine's mess. The Smyrna figs, stuck on a straw, looked luscious and good; and in good faith were not amiss to the taste; the large orange of Malta, with its rough skin and fresh colour, with the smooth small blood orange of Sicily, were placed near a basket of delicious and tempting grapes: here sausages and garlic, eggs and butter, bread and cheese, surrounded the fruit, giving the appearance of the combination of a porkman's, grocer's, and fruiterer's shop. As we skimmed through the motionless water, gliding in silence by the long quay of Valetta, we drew behind us a string of Maltese boats, by no other *attachment* than the love of gain, forming a kind of tail of a comet. "The eye of appropriation sweetens the

object : ” — I admit the truth in the fullest extent, when fruit is the object, and hungry midshipmen the gazers.

Malta, or rather Valetta, is one of the most singular towns in the world : it is built on the side of a steep hill, and slopes towards the harbour : on the summit of this hill the street, the Strada Reale, is paved, the same as in other towns ; but the streets leading to the harbour are composed of steps, a kind of out-of-door staircase, to ascend which, on a sultry day, with a tight hat and pinching boots, is not the most agreeable exercise or cool pleasure known to men of luxurious habits. The white houses, reflecting the rays of a scorching sun, are detrimental to the eyes, and produce all the painful sensations experienced when an officious valet introduces suddenly a glare of the morning, before the expanded pupil of the eye has time to contract and exclude more light than is requisite and comfortable. I recommend all griffins at Malta to be provided with green spectacles ; the glare is a great eyesore.

The Maltese propel their boats after the manner of the Venetian gondoliers : the man nearest the stern-sheets turns his back upon his fare, whilst the bowman (they have, generally speaking, never more than two rowers), more genteel than his companion, faces the company, being seated, which the after oarsman is not. It is the business of the last-named man to steer the boat ; and, as he faces forward, he sees his road, and avoids coming in contact with other boats, by either relinquishing or applying force. The stern-sheets are covered with striped awnings, and, from the number of the boats, and the constant traffic in the harbour, they tend greatly to enliven the scene, and to amuse the imprisoned stranger ; for such I call the common sailor. The view from the ships is narrow and uninteresting ; the barren ground seemed scorched into a cinder ; verdure was a rarity, and a tree an object useless to look for. The heat of the day is excessive, but the coolness of the evening deliciously exquisite.

The general landing-place is on a long quay, which flanks the city of Valetta. Here is always a busy scene ; the coffee-grinders turn their roasters ; the fruit-women

offer all the delicacies of Sicilian gardens ; different trades are carried on under awnings ; the venders of pure water, iced, come bawling for custom. *Aqua pura* is bellowed on one side, while a whole generation of beggars commence a running accompaniment, with a rolling bass, in the shape of a boyish tumbler, on the other. The costume of the Maltese tends not a little to charm the eye of a stranger, the buttons of their vests being of silver coin, or formed like a large and elegantly worked bell ; the red cap, the sash, and lastly the dark eye and browned countenance, occasionally giving a look of insidious malice, or fiery determination, only known to these climates. The men are low in stature, and lower in intellect ; the women are dirty, slovenly, and ugly. If ever a pretty girl is encountered, she is invariably Sicilian ; and from that mart of beauty and libertine manners the market for lawful and unlawful connexion is supplied. To Sicily they are indebted for almost every luxury in life ; there is a constant communication between Valetta and Nota Bay, from which charming and verdant spot Malta receives the rich harvest of the garden of the world.

The landing at Valetta has one peculiarity. A flight of steps leads to the town called Nix Mangiare Stairs. This name was given many years ago, by some sailors, in consequence of one batch of beggars who have inherited the lucrative situation from their parents, which is become now hereditary in the family. The present possessors fix themselves about the middle of the flight of steps, dressed in a most indelicate tatterdemalion style, and lifting up their voices and drooping their heads, commence in clear intonation, the following falsehood ; “ Oh ! signore, mi povero miserabile, nix padre, nix madre, nix mangiare for sixteen days per Jesu Christo.” Now the younger ones generally hold the hem of the apology of the mother’s gown ; and the father begins the first *false* note of the strain. They all know that sailors understand *mangiare* ; the negative *nix* is, strictly speaking, of maritime origin ; the sixteen days is always in English, which the fat chubby faces of the boys and girls is sufficient to contradict. At the conclusion of the erroneous statement

they all piously make the sign of the cross, and hold out their dirty straw hats. I am credibly informed that the sums gained by begging on these steps is nearly equal to the salary of the deputy-governor of the island ; and that the sinecure will be retained in that family until a suitable reform shall open it to competition. When no respectable person is coming past, the family sit upon the steps, one above the other, and prove the inutility of combs by the dexterity with which they dislodged all insect intruders ; in this they are second only to the monkey tribe. From the rapidity and success of their researches, I fancy they would be strong opponents to Julian the Apostate, who congratulated himself on having more inhabitants in his beard than Rome had within her walls.

The large and lofty aisle of the church of St. John might awaken the slumbering devotion of even a midshipman. But true it is, that foreign churches do not exercise that command over the mind which is felt on entering our own places of worship. The reason is, that it is reckoned no breach of decorum to walk about during the ceremony of the service ! Some stragglers gaze at the pictures. The women, who kneel in apparent devotion, allow their eyes to follow the stranger rather than the crucifix ; and the noise occasioned by walking materially tends to disturb that silence which promotes religious meditation and attention.

Who can help wishing to possess the skull of a saint ? Not I, and frankly do I admit it. First of all, I do not consider it much sacrilege to wish to be the proprietor of so holy a skull, with such charming eyes ; and I am sceptical enough to believe, that in purloining the canonized remains I should not much offend either St. Thomas, St. Francis, or St. Jerome, to whom it is affirmed they once belonged, having each an historical record about as true as that of the guardian saint of Corfu (St. Spiridion), the remains of whom become historically his, from the following veracious account :—It is recorded, that one day a fisherman in Smyrna Bay discovered a man walking on the sea towards his boat. The boatman was startled at first, but regained his courage when the spectre entered the boat, sat down, and desired the fisherman to row him to

Corfu (rather a long fare!); the distance may be somewhere about three hundred miles, and was performed in six hours. On stepping on shore the saint never paid the boatman, but said, "Bury me here in a glass case, and build a church on the spot." It was so done; and to this day have the credulous Corfuites such belief in the story, that during the plague in that island in 1816, they carried the saint round the walls of the town; and the saint, equally as powerful as Aaron's censer, stopped the plague; he was then exhibited for three days to the public, when every man, woman, or child, who had any proper belief, came and kissed the glass case, and made sterling offerings; the governor, Sir Thomas Maitland, setting a laudable example, by giving three hundred dollars. They say this valuable saint is worth five thousand pounds per annum to its owner and keeper; and after that I should like to see the heretic who would not be proud of accommodating a saint. The Maltese saints have diamond eyes, which glisten horribly in the skeleton-skull, and must be, from the numerous offerings, equally lucrative to their owners.

I confess I was rather disappointed at the interior of St. John's church. I expected a much finer sight, and more splendid altar-piece. The mosaic work is beautiful. Below the church there is a vault, in which you may see the remains of four of the knights of Malta. They have mouldered away until nothing is left but the bones and some black dust. I brought away some of the latter unobserved, and exhibited my treasure on board in the berth. Some one told the boatswain it was snuff, and he, at one rude pinch, extinguished my remains of a knight. On being told of the sacrilege he had committed, the whistling barbarian only replied, "Well, if it was a dead man, he ought to have set me a-coughing."

The harbour of Malta is one of the most secure in the world, and the island itself far from a disagreeable residence. The interior has some beautiful spots, such as the Boschetto, the gardens of St. Antonio, and the rising ground on which the Civita Vecchia stands. This last place is the general resort of the navy, as it is seven miles from Valetta, quite out of sight of the captain, and affords re-

creation in the shape of a ride. "Set a sailor on horseback, and he will ride to the devil;" that is not exactly true at Malta—he will ride no doubt, but not quite so far. A Maltese horse is just as stubborn as his owner, at least when a sailor is on his back. There is a stand of these animals at the corner of the Strada Mezzodi; and one in particular, a grey with a long tail and mane, was generally in attendance on Sunday, that being the day on which Jack is allowed to get drunk, and be put in the guard-house. Sailors are fond of riding, and consequently, after taking a glass of Rosolio (called by them, "roll your soul out"), and washing it down with a strong glass of punch, they repaired to the stand of horses, properly screwed up to face the animals. The gallant grey was always first favourite, and a little increase of price was put upon him, on account, I suppose, of the accommodation of the long mane, which to Jack was a *main-stay*: it stood as quiet and as harmless as a Boulogne donkey, an animal, from constant usage, never known to kick. The horse at Malta is paid for in advance, generally a dollar for a day's ride; and so quiet is the creature while his master is near, that a child or a sailor might fearlessly mount him. All hands mount at once, and stick their bended knees into the horses' sides, riding as short in the stirrups as a Mameluke or a Cossack. They generally commence operations by flourishing a thick stick, and crying out, "Make sail, lads," let it fall rather heavily on the horse. This is a mutual signal for war; off they go one after the other at full gallop, keeping in a line, like what they are, a flock of wild geese. The white horse always took the lead, his long tail being called the tow-ropes, to which the rider pointed, as a hint that he would assist the others. The speed gradually increases until the cavalcade near the St. Antonio gardens, a distance of about three miles, when the grey would stop short, pitch his rider over the bows, turn short round, and trot home again. It was quite in vain to attempt to mount him, even if you stopped him; he would kick and fling, bite and snort, and throw the whole convoy into disorder, not one of which would go on after he turned; but all in imitation of the commodore would pitch and toss, and swerve and kick,

until a general forcible dismounting would take place, the horses run home, and Jack be left to what he could manage better, his own legs. By the time they were half-way home, they would meet another convoy on their own horses, going to be kicked off at the same spot, and would be overtaken by the returning animals before they arrived. The coolness of the Maltese on these occasions is truly laughable ; they point to the horses, and tell the sailors to ride them if they like, but the instant they approach, the horses manifest their displeasure, and the scene ends by Jack losing his money and his ride in the bargain.

I have been an eye-witness to the tricks of the grey three times, and once it nearly ended fatally ; a midshipman, a messmate of mine, not being able to get a horse from the more respectable letters out of quadrupeds, unfortunately mounted the grey. He went with us very well to Civita Vecchia ; returning, however, was another concern. The midshipman, finding him showing a great disposition to dance, and thinking his stirrups too long, placed his feet in the leathers. When horse and man arrived at the old corner, the animal flew off at a gallop, dismounted my companion, whose legs were retained in the stirrups, and scampered towards Valetta, at every step kicking my poor friend up as high as his tail ; and finished the business by kicking down the throat every tooth but six of the poor youngster's.

I never shall forget that cursed grey horse if I live for the time a Spaniard wishes you invariably to live—namely, one thousand years. I took special good care never to try my skill upon him ; for I doubt if Kirsha the Cossack could have mastered the scientific brute.

The Maltese make lemonade better than any nation in the world ; that is, to my taste. Iced punch, in South America, is by no means a bad mixture. When the ingredients are properly prepared, a large mass of solid ice is placed in the tumbler, which, when you drink, keeps bobbing about your lips and the tip of your nose ; most effectually cooling you and the punch. In Malta, instead of spoons, you are served with a kind of skimmers, or spatulas, of no possible use to drink with, but given that you may apply your lips, and consequently, take twice as

much. No man knows the luxury of liquids who has not been baked and browned in either of the Indies or the Mediterranean. The poor tired wanderer of the desert, whose throat is parched with heat and sand, sits down by the scanty stream, rejoicing over the welcome but homely fare, and, in the moment of availing himself of the natural beverage of man, feels more real delight and pleasure than the heated wine-bibber over the most delicious expression of the grape.

In the time of which I write, Malta contained a sufficient number of those drains of the wealthy—gambling-houses; and these were frequented by officers of the army and navy; the latter of whom not being able to live without this greatest of all excitements, introduced the pernicious system into midshipmen's berths. I have been witness to some scenes which might rival the "Anecdotes of Gaming," in which one or two cases of misery, sudden poverty, madness, and death, are faithfully recorded. The midshipmen are more genteel now; and "Blind Hookey," the game played formerly, and at which the expert player can always dupe the unwary, has given way to *écarté* and short whist. The captain who allows this amusement on board, or even sets the example in his own cabin, is far more deserving of a flogging than the poor devil of a sailor, who, in the moment, the rare moment of fancied happiness, drinks an extra glass and becomes intoxicated. I am not here going to lecture upon the fatal results of play. I only know that even love, once supposed to be the greatest excitement in human nature, gives way and slinks into forgetfulness if opposed to the superior power of gambling; and if love, that in former days prompted the chivalrous to deeds of amazing valour and intrepidity, which occupies our early hours, banishing every pain by the hope of success, which can allay the cares and smooth the pillow of misfortune, is conquered by this enemy to all repose and all pleasures but its own, what chance has duty, which is the offspring of fear, against so powerful a foe? There is not a more dangerous character on board a ship than a gambler, and it behoves every man in the navy to pay a little more attention to this subject than has latterly been paid.



The Salsette was ordered to Smyrna ; and shortly after our arrival at that place, directions came that we should proceed to Constantinople, there to receive Mr. Adair, our minister, and convey him to Malta. Our stay was short at this miserable place, and would have been shorter, had not one of our frigates, the *St. Fiorenzo*, contrived to run her bowsprit on to a high cliff, by which she sustained considerable damage.

It was at Smyrna I first saw the activity of the Mamelukes, in a sham fight against some Turks. Sunday was the day selected for this amusement ; and to a flat of grass to the left of the town (that is looking from the anchorage) the different parties repaired. Each man was armed with a certain number of d'jherids, or blunted lances, about four or five feet in length, and carried also a small thick stick, by which he warded off the lance of his antagonist. Each party was drawn up—but not in regular line ; there was still regularity even in the irregularity of the forming ; an advance from either side was by no means an advance of the whole body ; separate detachments would rush forward in different directions, and shower their lances on their opponents. The velocity with which these d'jherids were hurled was perfectly extraordinary ; and the vigilance of the attacked party, and their activity in either warding off the blows, catching the flying spears, or throwing themselves from their horses, equally surprising. Sometimes, to avoid the lance in a retreat, they would throw themselves upon the back of the horse, and frequently would dismount, recover a lance, and mount again, at full gallop. This exercise quite convinced me that against a regular force they would be invariably unsuccessful ; but against undisciplined troops, stragglers, or a dispersed army, they would be terrific enemies.

These sham fights often end fatally. I saw one Turk killed on the spot ; the d'jherid struck him on the forehead, and he fell lifeless from his horse. This by no means stopped the amusement, although it afforded a world of speculative opinion, and it remained in much doubt amongst the faithful, if the deceased would go to heaven or not ; it being clearly understood amongst Mahometans, that

hours only wear their green kerchiefs for those who die in battle against an enemy. Now, as the Mameluke was only a sham enemy, the subject was one of intense interest to the faithful, and should be clearly understood by all parties who, on every Sunday, run a considerable chance of not outliving the day.

It is impossible to see horses better managed than at these fights. I have often seen two combatants keep their chargers in such a position, that neither horseman could throw his spear at his antagonist; and when tired of this evolution, one would gallop off, stretched upon the back of his steed, offering but a small surface for the aggressor to aim at. The training of the horses is attended by much cruelty; the poor devils have bits in their mouths, severe enough to manage an alligator; on which animal Mr. Waterton exhibited, to the great satisfaction of *every person who saw him*. From the gallop, the horses—not the alligators—are accustomed to halt suddenly, throwing themselves violently on their haunches. It will readily be admitted by every traveller that a Turk, or an Arab, sits upon a horse as if he were a Centaur, or a part of the animal; and on the gallop, from their costume, their accoutrements, and their elegance, they outrival any long-skirted coat dandy that ever rode in the Park, or curveted on a regimental charger.

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## CHAPTER VI.

IT was at one of those sham but earnest fights, mentioned in the last chapter, that I first saw Lord Byron; he was then on his travels, accompanied by the present Sir John Cam Hobhouse. His lordship solicited a passage in the Salsette to Constantinople, which, of course, was readily granted by Captain Bathurst, and a few days afterwards we were under weigh to our destination. We came to an anchor off the island of Tenedos, and in full view of the plains of Troy. An orange brought me into notice with

his lordship: he had inquired of the captain's steward if such a luxury was to be procured on board: the steward answered that he had none. I was sitting in the fore-cabin, wishing Hamilton More, Norie, and all other compilers and inventors of logarithms and rules in the bottomless pit; for I was puzzled, as usual, about a double altitude and the chronometer, when I heard the steward reply in the negative. I immediately ran below, and from the till of my chest brought forth two ripe Smyrna oranges. Being well aware how the stall-women polish their fruit, by means of their lips and a blacking-brush, I concluded a damp towel would answer every purpose, and having duly brightened the yellow skin of my fruit, returned, and offered them to his lordship. "I never knew a man lose anything by civility," said Marshal Turenne, as he bobbed his head to the tune of a round-shot, which passing over him, took off the noddle of his erect and uncourteous aide-de-camp. I always remember this story in action; and it consoles me in my cowardice to know that I am acting like a gentleman, and bowing to my enemies. "Many thanks, youngster," said his lordship "pray what are you so intent upon?"

"Endeavouring to find out the longitude," I replied.

His lordship remarked, with a smile, "Ah, that, indeed! why, it has puzzled older heads than yours before now."

I intend, in a future chapter, to give my opinion upon education on board a ship. I flatter myself I shall furnish some good hints upon this subject, feeling, as I do, that many idle hours of my early days might have been more profitably employed than borrowing "a day's work" from other midshipmen, or looking out a logarithm while my comrade completed the calculation. The next day I was nominally at work again in the cabin, when Lord Byron requested he might be landed on the plains of Troy: in point of fact, he had been gazing through a telescope on the scene of the brilliant actions of antiquity for hours before. "I will take this young acquaintance of mine with me, with your permission, Captain Bathurst."—"Certainly," replied that excellent man; and in one minute my books were closed, the chronometer sights handed

over for the benefit of others, and I down below, "*cleaning myself*," as the term is on board a ship, to go on shore.

His lordship had his fowling-piece handed into the boat, and we shoved off, all in high spirits. It blew a stiff breeze, and the boat surged her gunwale in the water, as she lifted over the wave. I more than once thought we carried too much sail, and edged as much to windward as possible, grinning and twisting my face about like a cat in the rain. The cockswain ventured to hint that she would go the faster for having a reef in. This was strenuously opposed by Lord Byron, who was a capital sailor, and we arrived, safe and sound, though by no means dry, in the bay, where it is supposed the Grecian fleet was formerly hauled on shore.

I did not care much about Homer, or the Greeks or Trojans either; my knowledge then was about as much circumscribed as an Eton boy's. A midshipman's education is about on a par with some of these stuffed, crammed, young gentlemen of public schools. I remember being desired by a fond parent to ask his son some question, having previously heard that he was a prodigy. As Napoleon was then the general theme of conversation, I asked where that great man was born? "I don't know that," was the reply; "but this I know, that the eleven of Eton would beat any eleven boys in France;" and we must admit this is something, considering the trifling yearly expense at that seminary of useful knowledge.

The gig was sent on board, and we proceeded to the ruins of Troy: his lordship being accompanied by two servants—presents from that furious monster, Ali Pacha; as Lord Byron called him, "the mildest-looking gentleman he ever saw." These two were his constant body-guard; and the attachment between master and men was reciprocal. Troy and its plains were hallowed ground to his lordship, which I ventured to profane, by blazing away at every bird I saw; and while the poet was imagining the great events of former days, I was lost in sweet hope of the next day's dinner, to which I largely contributed every time the birds sat still to be shot at. We had a long walk round old walls, over which the speedy lizard

kept running, as if he were the sovereign ruler of the ruin; and I was tired enough when his lordship brought himself to an anchor upon the tomb of Patroclus, producing a book, which he read with the utmost attention, occasionally glancing his quick eye over the plains. It was a Homer: in one of his notes on Childe Harold, the noble poet mentions the difference of feelings excited by reading Homer on the spot, and in the school-room. I remember his being highly amused at my leaping across the Scamander. It is now a mere rivulet, although in many parts the ground is distinctly marked which formed its former bed, and satisfies the traveller that it must have been a broad and a rapid river. In the evening we returned on board, having previously crossed to Tenedos, tasted sherbet, and smoked a pipe with the governor of that miserable fortress. On the plains of Troy I purchased a small white goat, which I shall presently introduce to the reader.

No armed ship is allowed to approach the sublime city without a firman, or order, giving permission to pass the forts in the Dardanelles; and I can aver that the divan are not the most expeditious granters of common requests, for they kept us exactly one month before they allowed us to proceed. We found plenty of recreation on shore and on board; but "hope deferred maketh the heart sick:" it was therefore necessary to keep our bodies in health, and an inland excursion was proposed. This was afterwards altered, and it was settled that we should ride to Abydos. His lordship's servants were sent on shore to provide horses, and the next day we repaired early in the morning to the appointed spot; not, however, quite so well prepared as the bowmen in Chevy Chase. We were a motley group to be sure; some in uniform, some in travellers' garb, Turkish and Greek servants, with a lot of running footmen, with their roomy inexpressibles, which stuck out like balloons as they advanced against the wind. We made a good and fair start; that is to say, we got athwart our horses without any particular difficulty, and no accident. Our *line* advanced, because naval etiquette does not allow of midshipmen riding alongside of the captain, and consequently we formed a line.

Everything looked prosperous, and we were all in high spirits, shaking off official restraint as we left the boats in the distance. Captain Bathurst, who imagined he could govern his horse as he could his ship, by means of discipline, was applying the whip, much to the annoyance of the animal, for the captain very properly wished to keep company with his friends, while the horse was a stalking proof that, although he might be gregarious, he was by no means sociable, and therefore was determined to return to the village whence he came. It soon came to a decided quarrel between man and beast: the whip was freely administered, but the horse was the dull ass that would not mend his pace for beating, at least in the right direction, for he began to yaw about like a hog in a high wind. We therefore took the captain's part, and endeavoured, by probing, beating, and kicking his refractory animal, to keep him on the proper course. This was resented on his part by sundry kicks and sudden turns: the captain lost his stirrups, which are in fact the shrouds of a horseman, to keep him (the mast) upright and secure. The animal felt his advantage, and began forthwith to pitch about like a ship in a head sea; and the captain was thrown first against the pommel of the saddle, and afterwards over the bows of the horse. There he lay, cocked-hat, sword and all; whilst the liberated animal fired a parting salute, kicked up its wanton heels, and scampered back like the gallant grey at Malta. The captain being severely hurt, was conveyed back to the frigate, under the charge of Lord Byron's servants, and we directed our course along shore to our destination.

It was a sultry, close, hot, disagreeable day; and neither the ride nor the saddles were much to my fancy or comfort. I was left under the special protection of Lord Byron, and consequently, kept close by his side. We had made good about four miles, when in a wood, through which the road turns, according to the line of beauty, in continual curves, we came suddenly upon a squadron of Turks, all mounted upon spirited animals, and all as surprised at meeting the Giaours, as we were at finding ourselves so near the true believers. However, in this instance,

they were false believers, for they imagined we were Russians; and not thinking (a Turk never thinks—that would be a species of work) of the impossibility of Russian gentlemen from Moscow taking a forenoon's ride along the shores of the Dardanelles, more especially the Asiatic side, drew their sabres, and showed other very intelligible signs of having cleared for action, and declared war against our party. They had the courtesy to hail us before they commenced operations: it was to my ears a strange jumble of very unwelcome sounds, bellowed out with deep intonation, all speaking at once, and something like a Dutch concert,—all singing different tunes. Their mustachios stood out, resembling an enraged cat's whiskers; their eyes flashed like lightning, and their countenances betrayed their eager desire for the encounter. In the mean time, our party began to make all preparations for fight; and had it not been for Lord Byron's coolness we should have been minus a head or two before long; for the foremost of the hot-headed Turks waved their sparkling cimeters over their turbaned skulls, whilst those in the rear drew forth their splendid pistols, and cocked them. No sooner, however, did they learn that we were friends, as true as religious enemies could be, than they expressed their satisfaction in suitable terms, returned their sabres to the scabbards, gave a very oriental and elegant bend, and, much to my satisfaction, trotted past us at a quick pace. I never read those lines of Lord Byron's, beginning

“The foremost Tartar's in the gap,”

without thinking of the above scene, which I am confident he bore in remembrance when that part of the Giaour was written, for it is exact to the life.

It was about two in the afternoon when we arrived at the place (Abydos), famous in poetry for Leander's love and folly. The English consul, at whose house we stopped to refresh man and horse, was an Italian Jew, married to a Greek woman, the progeny being about as mixed a breed as a turnspit dog. He was the dirtiest consul I ever knew, and might have done excellently for consul-general in Hayti; the vermin, which even a Mal-

tese woman dislodges from her child, crawled in careless security over his collar: we were glad enough to escape their contact; and although it is due to this dirty fellow to mention his hospitality, yet I should be sorry enough to be condemned to accept of either his arm or his house. We took boat and repaired to Sestos, the strong fortification on the European side. It blew fresh, and the constant rains and easterly wind rendered the current stronger and the water colder than usual. I could not comprehend for what possible amusement we had crossed the Dardanelles, excepting it might have been to visit a part of Europe and Asia in a quarter of an hour. The sea view of Abydos was not a likely reason, and we knew well enough that the jealous Turks who had refused us admission into the fortress on the Asiatic side, would be just about as uncivil on the European shore.

Whilst I was ruminating on the useless excursion, I saw Lord Byron in a state of nudity, rubbing himself over with oil, and taking to the water like a duck: his clothes were brought into the boat, and we were desired to keep near him; but not so near as to molest him. This was his first attempt at imitating Leander, of which he has made some remarks in the note to the lines written on crossing the Hellespont. He complained instantly on plunging in of the coldness of the water; and he by no means relished the rippling which was caused by an eddy not far from where he started. He swam well—decidedly well. The current was strong, the water cold, the wind high, and the waves unpleasant. These were fearful odds to contend against, and when he arrived about half way across, he gave up the attempt, and was handed into the boat, and dressed. He did not appear the least fatigued, but looked as cold as charity, and as white as snow. He was cruelly mortified at the failure, and did not speak one word until he arrived on shore. His look was that of an angry disappointed girl, and his upper lip curled, like that of a passionate woman,—I see it now, as if it were but yesterday.

We had some coffee and pipes, the common offerings in these parts, at our consul's; reserving the sight of the fort and the town (such a place to call a town!) until we



should arrive in the frigate. The horses were discharged, and we hired a boat. When the evening advanced, we embarked and sailed down the Dardanelles to the frigate. On passing Fort Asia, so called from its situation on the Asiatic shore, the sentinel hailed us, and desired us to land. Lord Byron, who had recovered his gaiety with the rising of the moon, swore, in good modern Greek, that he would not land to please any Turk in Asia; whereupon the sentinel thought proper to practise firing at a mark, and began at the boat: he did not hit us, and we were soon out of his reach, for the current swept us at about the rate of six knots an hour, and we had a sail in the bargain. We arrived safe, although the crew nearly mutinied when the first shot was fired. They might as well have attempted to move the mosque of St. Sophia, as turn Byron from his determination, which none but a woman could effect. It was a saying in after-life of Lord Byron's servant, "Every woman can govern my lord—but my lady." It appears by all accounts, that men could neither intimidate nor manage the poet: he certainly was not easily led by our sex.

At last the firman did make its appearance, and the wind being fair, we made sail; not, however, before we had a difference of opinion relative to the necessity of leaving our powder behind; but, as it so happened that we had a very large quantity on board as a present to the Sultan, it was voted quite useless, and certainly derogatory to the British nation, to leave our own, and we succeeded in going onwards, in no way curtailed of our fair proportions. As the wind gradually died away, and left us unable to stem the current, we came to an anchor close under the fort of Abydos. In the course of the night we were twice roused to quarters, owing to the noise and confusion in the fort, within pistol-shot of which we were anchored. It was merely their unchristian-like way of relieving the guard; at which ceremony they made more noise than a whole school of boys round a bonfire. It was beneficial in one respect to the inhabitants of the town, as they were thus apprised that their guardians were on the alert, for the Turks entertained the preposterous idea that we were there for some sinister purpose.

The next day was calm and warm. We had not a breath of wind, "and ocean slumbered like an unweaned child." Lord Byron was up early, and made arrangements for his second and more successful attempt at swimming the Hellespont. Mr. Ekenhead proposed to dispute the honour, and both gentlemen left the ship about nine o'clock, and landed on the European side. Above Sestos there is a narrow point of land which juts into the Dardanelles, and below Abydos there is a similar formation of coast, the point of the sandy bay on the Asiatic side projecting some distance. From point to point, that is, if they were opposite to each other, the distance would be about a mile—certainly not more; but as the current is rapid, and as it is impossible to swim directly across, the distance actually passed over would be between four or five miles. Mr. Ekenhead took the lead, and kept it the whole way. He was much the better swimmer of the two, and by far the more powerful man. He accomplished his task, according to Lord Byron's account, in an hour and five minutes. I timed him at one hour and ten minutes, and his lordship at one hour and a quarter. Both were fresh and free from fatigue, especially Ekenhead, who did not leave the water until Lord Byron arrived. As the distance has been much exaggerated, our great enemy, Time, may be the best way of computing it. It is a well-known fact that it must be a strong swimmer to accomplish a mile an hour. I have often seen it tried, and tried it myself. A mile an hour is a very fair estimation; and therefore, making allowance for the time lost in floating, of which resource both availed themselves, the distance actually swum may be safely called a mile, and not more, certainly. This is no very Herculean task. The particular circumstance under which Leander undertook his nightly labour, if ever he did undertake it continually, which I am sceptical enough to doubt, makes the story palatable.

Poor Ekenhead did not live long to enjoy his triumph, or the pleasure of hearing his feats immortalised by the pen of Byron. On our return to Malta, he heard of his promotion to the rank of captain of marines; a rank not

attained without many a dreary year's hard service ; and having offered, it is supposed, an unusual libation to Bacchus on his good fortune, owing to his comrade's death, he somehow or other managed to tumble over the bridge which separates Nix Mangiare Stairs from Valetta, and was killed on the spot. The verses which celebrate the great undertaking, written in May, on board the Salsette, have no reference (except in the note appended to them) to poor old Ekenhead ; but in Don Juan the omission has been filled up, and we find mention of it in the line,

“ Leander, Mr. Ekenhead, and I did.”

This feat accomplished, and I having been put in half-a-dozen of the great guns in the fort of Abydos, merely to say that I had been in a gun, the breeze becoming strong and favourable, we weighed anchor, in two days rounded the Seraglio Point, and anchored off the town of Pera, in the harbour of Constantinople.

It is said females have more curiosity than men. I doubt it ; because it is affirmed that “curiosity is a strong sign of a vigorous intellect ;” and in men the vigour of intellect is generally greater than in women. When we passed the Seraglio we manifested as much curiosity to see the inmates as they did to see us ; our telescopes were unceasingly directed to the small peep-holes, misnamed windows ; and little did two of the young imprisoned beauties dream that we were criticising their features, or they would have veiled their faces. I know not if the Turkish women have the same belief in the powers of a telescope that the lower class of the people have in South America : the latter believe that the telescope reverses every object, and that consequently they are seen standing on their heads, and making any thing else but a proper appearance. I never directed the glass towards a female at Maracaibo but she fell on the ground, and doubled herself up like a hedge-hog ; neither would she unroll herself until she was quite satisfied that the danger of exposing her person in so ludicrous a position was passed.

The first gun of our salute was the signal for the ladies to retire from the windows ; and it then became all smoke and noise until we anchored. The novelty of the sight,

the beauty of the scenery, the magnificence of the mosques, with the tall Minâh, occupied our attention until sunset ; then the busy hum of men gradually decreased, and when the night advanced, Constantinople looked one dark and sombre mass, lulled into perfect silence. The boatman in his caique, as he glided like a spectre through the water, was unheard, and scarcely seen ; and little would the unaccustomed stranger credit his vicinity to a large and populous capital from the undisturbed tranquillity which reigned around him.

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## CHAPTER VII.

It is not every man in the navy who has the good fortune to visit the Sublime Porte ; so difficult is it of access, and so tenacious are the 'Turks of the violation of their "Black Sea," by the keels of English men-of-war, that we have seldom had the slightest intelligence or information concerning the navigation of this part of the globe, until the "Memoir of the Voyage of his Majesty's ship Blonde in the Black Sea," by the Rev. Edmund Goodenough, Dean of Wells, 1829.

The captain of the Blonde was peculiarly successful in all his undertakings : he made Turks waltz and Mahometans in turbans flourish in a quadrille. In my time, they would as soon have danced on their heads as on their heels, and done the one as well as the other ; then the Turks were a quiet people, to be seen sitting in verandahs, sipping coffee and smoking long pipes, without attempting to disturb each other by conversation, deeming it childish to laugh and unmanly to weep, — a nation proud of themselves, their city, and their prophet ; honest in their dealings, and hospitable in their abodes. But if a Turk begins to double shuffle, and cut, my account may be read as a memorial of past ages and manners.

We had landed our powder and our passengers ; the first for the sultan, and the last for the good of the nation,

and put the ship in harbour fashion, when we were visited by several Turks, some of rank, but mostly idlers, whose curiosity was feebly excited, and who, in all probability, came to us to get rid of themselves.

Smoking is a very genteel accomplishment on shore, but formerly just the reverse on board a ship. Jack, with his long tail and loose trowsers, frequented the galley, and smoked away unmolested, until the master-at-arms warned him off. Cigars were not then to be seen sticking out of a midshipman's mouth, like a pencil in a twopenny-postman's jowl, and we were consequently cleaner in our manners, and sweeter in our persons. The Turks started with amazement when they were informed "that smoking was not allowed on the quarter-deck:" and, consequently, as fast as a Turk seated, or rather squatted himself, on a carronade slide, so soon did I desire a quarter-master to warn him off the premises. As this was amusement to me, though the reverse to the Turks, they became infuriated at being badgered by a boy, and, by way of getting rid of all importunities, one grave-looking Mussulman proposed to buy me, and asked one of the older midshipmen if I was for sale.

"By all manner of means," replied my vender (we nominally suppress slavery, but, in truth, encourage it, without we make some prize-money); "but how much will you give for him, for he is a good-looking youngster?"

"Thirty sequins," said the Turk.

"Thirty devils!" replied my master; "sell a Christian for thirty sequins!"

"And quite enough too for any heretic," resumed the Turk.

"Not exactly," said the midshipman; "for you will not get him under forty."

As ten sequins was a mere trifle, the Turk agreed to the purchase, produced his money, and proceeded to count it out on the capstan; at the same time calling upon his turbaned tribe to secure me, I being his good and lawful property. I began to fancy this no joke, or rather that we had carried the joke too far; so making a dart at the main rigging, I began to scud up like a monkey. My purchaser at first began to handle his pistols, but my

vender soon stopped that proceeding ; — shooting is not allowed on the quarter-deck. The companion of the Turk began to ascend the rigging in pursuit of me, to the infinite merriment of the crew, who were bursting with laughter at my fright, and the Turk's eagerness and clumsiness.

The officers were at dinner, and we had the ship to ourselves. I had heard strange stories of these Turks, and felt by no means inclined to venture myself in their clutches ; the consequence was, that my fears rather predominated over my hopes. I became nervous and irresolute, and far from mounting the rigging with my usual agility, I bungled at every ratline, and made as many false steps as a drunken man on an inclined plane. Still, however, I kept a long way a-head of my pursuer, and when he arrived at the main-top, I was snug enough on the cross-trees. Like a great fool as I was, I began to mount higher, thinking the Turk would be afraid to follow me, instead of descending by one side as he mounted on the other — a kind of up-and-down system — like buckets in a well. He saw his advantage and my error, and hastened to avail himself of the opportunity, ascending the top-mast cross-trees. My situation became less and less pleasant every moment, and the captain of the main-top, thinking the Turk was quite high enough, jumped aloft with one or two of his men, and catching my friend on the top-mast cross-trees, fastened him hands and feet to the top-gallant rigging ; during which operation I took the liberty of descending. The profanation of person was violently resisted by the Turk, who kicked, and spluttered, and frowned, and struggled, all to no purpose ; he was in the hands of sailors, and they left him to his meditations and his prayers, seized up, according to the rules of seamanship.

As his companion on deck began to be clamorous about his property and his friend, he and his sequins were popped into a boat and sent on shore, our prisoner being the only Turk left on board. He saw his countrymen bundled out of the ship, and himself in the hands of heretics, without betraying any alarm. He behaved him-

self with all the sullen gravity of his sect, until the sun began to near the horizon; and then he lifted up his voice to Allah in the most orthodox and stentorian style. It had a great deal more effect upon the first-lieutenant than on Allah, for the Turks in the boats near the ship took their countryman's part, and produced a regular uproar in the harbour. An order was instantly given to liberate the prisoner, and down he came, foaming with rage, and brawling, his mustachios bristling like a tiger's whiskers.

On arriving on deck, he looked round with most profound contempt, and, making a cross with his fingers, he first spit on that, and then on the deck (which last affair was quite against all orders, for spitting is not allowed on the quarter-deck). Finally, muttering either a blessing or a curse, quite immaterial to us which, he jumped overboard and swam to shore. I prayed that he might be swept by the current into the Sea of Marmora, and there become the companion of some of the thousand Turkish women who have visited that bath in sacks. He landed safe enough, instantly stripped and washed his garments of all pollutions, sat down with his companions, and chattered away like a magpie. This was rather a bad beginning; Turks do not forget injuries.

We should have been without further amusement that week, had we not detected an Armenian Jew in selling us most villanous trash for attah of roses, and some coarse article for camel-hair shawls. The first of these commodities is difficult to be disguised, for the real attah never leaves a mark on paper. If it is diluted, a highly concentrated oil must be used, and then detection is sure. The Astracan goats had been robbed to make our camel-hair shawls, for which this true and consistent follower of Moses, or Mahomet, as circumstances required, charged us a most exorbitant price. We inveigled the cheat forward on the starboard side of the main-deck, and shaved his beard — a most signal disgrace; then putting his head in a bag to keep his chin warm, we seized him up to a gun, and touched him up with a cat-o'-nine-tails. By way of reconciliation, for sailors “never let the sun go down upon

their anger," we made him drunk, tarred his face, and sent him on shore.

I began soon to repent of these doings. The following circumstance sickened me from being concerned in seizing Turks aloft. It was the constant practice of the midshipmen to form parties on horseback, and imitate our Smyrna friends, by a sham fight with d'jherids. If a dog crossed the battle-field, of course it afforded us additional pastime, as we all left our ranks to hunt or to spear it. It was at one of these exhibitions of nautical horsemanship that a d'jherid struck my horse on the head: the animal instantly turned short round, and, as I attempted to regain my position, which had been altered from the perpendicular by the sudden twirl, I, having nautical knowledge, dropped the bridle and had recourse to the *mane*. The horse, finding itself free from all restraint, got its head up in the air, set off at full gallop, and proceeded homewards down a narrow street; the cheers of my companions, and the parting volley of sticks, by no means contributed to arrest the progress of my liberated animal. I tugged, and pulled, and hauled, all to no purpose: my horse seemed to know he was steering a right course, and the more I pulled, the faster he went.

At last the eternal bumping jolted one of the pistols from my pocket, for in those days we all went armed like Turks. I then made an extra exertion, and stopped the horse. I was surrounded instantly by a host of Turks, one of whom picked up the pistol, and seemed very little inclined to part with it. To my horror and dismay, the very Turk we had so signally disgraced by lashing aloft, came out of the house opposite which I had stopped, and recognized me at a glance. One Turk already held the bridle, merely, of course, to arrest the animal if he should again attempt to start off: in fact I was a prisoner. The malignant vengeance of the insulted Mahometan sparkled in his furious eyes; he whispered hastily to one of his companions who led the horse nearer to the door, whilst he himself desired me to give up the other pistol. This I affected not to understand: he then pointed to my dirk, and desired me to dismount. With what an anxious eye did I look



around me for some assistance ! I knew the perilous situation in which my own imprudence had placed me, and I knew that nothing but exertion and courage could liberate me. I therefore drew the other pistol from my pocket, as if to deliver it to my enemy. This was cocked in an instant, and pointed at the head of the man who held the bridle. He retreated at the menace, and I began to kick and halloo to start the horse into a gallop, which having effected, I encouraged by every means in my power ; and thus, pursued by a host of Turks, I made the best of my way to the market, which is the landing-place at Pera. In vain I looked for a boat, there was none on shore ; I therefore jumped from the horse, and left him to find his own way home, ran up the hill to the right, and got into the Greek inn, making all convenient speed to the billiard-room, where I was sure of finding some one, and sat down in sullen silence in a corner. I was not a little pleased to see one of our midshipmen enter, and restore me my pistol. He had been obliged to show fight for its restoration. He cautioned me, and I most religiously observed the caution, never to ride down that street again.

M<sup>r</sup>Farlane's Constantinople may be more profitably consulted for descriptive scenery than my memorandum book. I should give but a very faint idea of the dancing dervishes and their maniac proceedings ; but I had two opportunities which few travellers have had ; the one of seeing the interior of the mosques, and the second of dining with the grand vizier. But before I begin to introduce my reader to these novelties, I shall conduct him round the Turkish fleet, and give him some insight into the internal regulations of their ships, and their disregard of all precautions and all dangers.

It was shortly after the leave of audience between Mr. Adair and the capitan bashaw, at which extraordinary ceremony I was present, that we visited in a kind of official manner the fleet of the Sultan. We had received the invitation from the capitan bashaw, which in some measure made amends for his haughty, insulting reception of our minister and ourselves : for at that leave of audience he never condescended to rise from his musnud as we entered

the room ; and even the general business of coffee, sherbet, and pipes, was not offered with the usual warm welcome of the Turks.

We were received on board the admiral's ship without any particular mark of respect, excepting indeed the probability of losing our lives ; for the captain of the ship and some of his officers were seated on the quarter-deck, smoking away in all the security of predestination, although the crew were employed in hoisting in the powder, and rolling the barrels close to the pipe-bowls. We, who are accustomed during this ceremony to put out every light in the ship, with the exception of one properly protected in the powder-room, and who are so guarded against accidents which might arise, that the men in the magazine are obliged to wear slippers, to prevent the possibility of creating a spark by striking their shoes, which might have a nail therein, against the nails in the deck, were naturally not very easy during the operation ; but the Turks cared no more about danger than bull-dogs. They received us cordially ; but I fear we did not duly appreciate their civility, for we hurried from that ship, and betook ourselves to another at a convenient distance.

In the Turkish navy they have no hammocks or mess-tables. They roll their mess traps up in a carpet, which is stowed in the nettings ; the consequence is, that a Turkish ship looks unusually clear to an English or French officer. When they go to dinner these carpets are unstowed, and the mess form themselves round their eternal cloth, and feed with their fingers ; as knives and forks have yet to penetrate through the folly of national custom. They have not studied "The Results of Machinery ;" and are by no means convinced that tables, chairs, glasses, &c. contribute to the comforts of life. As to beds on board, they are unknown ; the Turkish sailor lies down upon the softest plank he can find, and is always ready at a moment's call, as he never unrigs himself. Aloft they are a mass of blocks and a crowd of ropes. It would require some nice discrimination in declaring the superiority between them and their enemies the Russians. The latter have wonderfully improved within these last four years, and have now some

pretensions to good discipline and proper appearance. But the Turks, if they are commonly deficient in seaman-like appearance, are uncommonly deficient in the science of navigation. The master of one of their ships asked for the sun's declination for the present and ensuing year; mentioning, with a look of consummate satisfaction, that he was the only man in the ship who understood either compass or quadrant. He was quite astonished at being told that all our youngsters understood the mystery; and remarked, when he saw one of us take an altitude, "that the beardless boy had much wisdom." Mr. Morier mentions a similar occurrence in Hajji Baba; the Persians were confounded at the science of the boys: but we might return them the compliment, for they can tell when a man ought to take physic from an altitude of the sun or a star. The Turk's astonishment was increased when he was given to understand that almost every man in the ship could manage the helm, and that many could work the reckoning. The Turkish navy was, of course, voted gloriously *out* of order. To the last day of our remaining we had thousands of Turkish seamen to witness our sending down the top-gallant and royal yards without a man aloft. They had no more idea of tripping-lines than they had of a pianoforte.

The Turks, unlike the South Americans, rise with the lark. On the morning of the day fixed for the leave of audience with the sultan, we fired a salute at four o'clock A. M. as his sublime majesty passed the ship. By five o'clock the ambassador with his numerous suite, in which was included Lord Byron, Mr. Hobhouse, and all the disposable officers of the Salsette, had landed at Constantinople. Horses, richly caparisoned, were in attendance. The animal destined to bear the envied load of diplomacy was covered with gold, the whole accoutrements being magnificent; the other superiors of our cortége had horses arranged for them, but amongst the minor stars we scrambled for ours. I selected a fine gallant grey with a rich embroidered saddle-cloth, which began to caper and prance, much to my annoyance, when it felt my light weight. The road, or rather streets, were lined with janissaries, through two files of whom we had to pass; and these soldiers took

are we kept our places, for if we attempted to ride out of our rank, they seized the bridle and reinstated us. In this manner, and without any accident, we arrived at the Seraglio-gate, making, for Christians, a very creditable show, and assuming as much gravity as we could command on the occasion ; but midshipmen are always boys even if they are fifty years of age, and as we found ourselves out of sight of the captain, we laughed most un-orientally, and amused ourselves by endeavouring to unship one another upon every possible occasion. Mustapha, who had resided in England, and who was specially intrusted with the care of us, often rebuked us for the want of proper respect for the sultan's officers, who severally were quizzed, as we passed them. Indeed, Mustapha himself stood a good chance of being accommodated with a fowl's feather in his turban ; but we relinquished the idea, when we considered the care and attention we always had received from this excellent janissary and dragoman.

We alighted at the outer gate of the Seraglio, and repaired to the inner square. Here we were to be amused by seeing the troops paid : I fancy, a sight the soldiers would like to see a little more frequently and regularly at present. The money for the different companies was put in various bags, and placed at a certain distance from the soldiers ; at the word of command, they all started for the prize, the quickest runner getting possession. He received some extra paras (a small coin, three of which make a penny,) for conveying the bag to the barracks. This was amusing enough for a short time, but we soon tired of this ungraceful clumsiness, and of seeing a heap of Turks sprawling on the ground. We were ushered into the hall, in which was the grand vizier. On a previous day we had taken leave of him, but I have omitted any description of that ceremony, as the present scene with the sultan was the more magnificent. Blackberries and pomegranates are never dished up at the same table.

The grand vizier was seated under a kind of canopy, on a raised musnud ; before him was a table, about two feet from the floor ; and in different parts of the room round tables were placed, or sprinkled about, like those in a club-

room. The ambassador sat at the table of the grand vizier, — whether he was allowed to place his knee on the musnud or not, I could not see, and certainly should not have remarked. The rest were distributed at the different tables, according to their respective ranks, with the exception of myself. Captain Bathurst never allowed me to go out of his sight, without Mustapha had hold of me ; so that I now had the honour of being near the great capitan bashaw, the Turkish admiral, who never had been to sea since the day he was born ! We squatted like tailors—a position easy enough for a boy, but irksome in the extreme to a grown person, unaccustomed to make coats, or to keep his legs in one position like a fakir. Table-cloths we had ; but the substitutes for fingers, knives and forks, were dispensed with. When we had taken our seats, an order came from the sultan, “ that the *infidels* might be clothed and fed and brought before him.” We were to be fed first, and commenced operations after the following singular manner : bear well in mind, it is not every man who has been robbed by the sultan of the East, and crammed in company with his grand vizier. Inshallâh ! Praise God ! I *am* somebody.

One dish was brought at a time, and placed in the centre of the table. We had no soup ; and if fish was offered, it was in such an oriental garb, that I never found my friend out. As may be supposed, no Christian was in a hurry to begin the repast. A mass of jammed meat was placed before us, swimming in gravy, greasy enough ; and we had neither knife, fork, nor spoon. The capitan bashaw, with proper becoming Turkish gravity and politeness, aware of our awkwardness, kindly became our master, and set a laudable example, by plunging his fingers into the dish of mashed meat, and throwing his head back with most oriental elegance (for Turks are elegant and polished in their manners), deposited the savory morsel into as wide a mouth as Grimaldi's. It was beautifully executed ; not a drop of gravy fell upon his dress, and he followed up the first attack with a rapid seizure of another pinch. My eyes were fixed upon the great admiral. I opened my mouth insrinctively, in imitation of my superior officer. Our party looked at each other in silent astonishment : the

example fairly set we were not hasty to follow ; for it was wisely remarked that the fingers of the heretic ought not to dip in the same dish with those of the faithful ; but as the sultan had desired that the infidels should be fed, we considered it nothing more than common civility to obey so sublime a mandate ; and as we protested in former days against a priest receiving the sacrament for the whole body of communicants, so we respectfully protested against the capitan bashaw eating for all of us. I took an encouraging wink from his lordship, and stretched my eager hand, which Captain Bathurst very properly put aside, saying, "S—s—stop, youngster, I fancy you have had a scarcity of w—w—w—water ; let me tr—tr—tr—try first : why, you have forgotten to w—w—wash your hands this morning." I believe there was some truth in the accusation ; a toilet at four o'clock is never very carefully performed : we always called the Turks dirty fellows, and I concluded that I should not be worse than my neighbours.

We all got on well enough, and pecked away at discretion ; dish after dish was brought in rapid succession, and into every one I dipped my paw. We ate in silence, more like baboons than human creatures. Turks seldom converse with much animation at any time, and often have I seen them swallow smoke and coffee for hours together without uttering a syllable. Of all the eatables offered, we managed the kabobs the best ; these are small pieces of grilled meat placed upon a wooden skewer, about a respectable mouthful in size, and easily handled ; but of these, for it is a common dish, and by no means admissible into a Turk's cookery-book as a fashionable edible, there were but few, and they were shortly demolished. Towards the conclusion of the feast came a boiled turkey. We looked at each other, then at the bird. I laughed outright at the sudden dilemma, and silence was broken by Captain Bathurst, who voted us "p—p—properly puzzled at last ;" but no ! the capitan bashaw seized the bird by the breast, and twisting his hand, tore off a large portion of the meat ; another of our party, the present Sir Stratford Canning, I believe, attempted to follow the example, but he was unsuccessful as to quantity, and we hesitated to make another

trial. I ventured to hint, for I like turkeys, that the legs could be easily managed, and that a certain good allowance would be the result of success. "Well, then," said the captain, "do you seize one, and I'll try the other." I did as I was ordered (good boy!), and in a second we left only the body for the rest of the company. It was boiled to rags, and hardly repaid us for the laugh we occasioned.

The bashaw did not laugh, he never relaxed a muscle of his face, and seemed to think himself by no means nearer heaven for being placed in such excommunicated society. I counted thirty-two dishes; the last was the worst of all: to judge from appearance, taste, and smell, it was a composition of garlic, onions, and toad-stools; the effect was so nauseous, that it very nearly dislodged what I had so carefully stowed away. Iced sherbet, a beverage fit for angels, was handed round, and drunk out of silver goblets; after which came baked pears, done exactly in our fashion, with the sauce as red as if the cochineal fly was used in Turkish kitchens as well as in our own.

There was now a dead halt for a short time, when a phalanx of *doubtful* men appeared with silver basins and napkins. I could not refrain from smiling when I saw the idleness, and want of common exertion in the capitan bashaw; a slave washed his face, he remaining as passive as a well-fed child. In the meantime, the very necessary ablution took place amongst us all. A respectable Turk washed my chin, for I could not then swear by my beard; and afterwards performed the same requisite cleansing towards my hands in perfumed water, drying them in the softest of napkins. "Oh, oh!" quoth I, "if ever I do change my religion, I'll turn Turk; this is something like luxury."

The ceremony of feeding being disposed of, we were ordered to attend the sultan, and the robing commenced, according to our different rank. The ambassador had a splendid ermined robe, ornamented with gold. The captain's and Lord Byron's were not deficient in elegance and intrinsic value, but as for the rest (with the exception of the tail of the comet, the fag end of diplomacy, a kind of feathers to a quill), we had the cheapest court-dresses ever

seen. I sold mine, after I had used it as a dressing-gown, for twenty piastres ; and certainly I could not have expected that sum had it not come from the Seraglio.

Mr. Adair followed the vizier and some of the great officers of state ; the janissaries then interfered to prevent a rush, but in reality to keep out too many from crowding the sublime presence ; but I was held fast by the captain, and had the honour of making a low bow to Mahmoud II. Mahmoud was then about five-and-twenty years of age, a remarkably handsome man, with the most orthodox of black beards ; if all reports are true, the sultan ought to be a Blue-beard. He rose to receive the ambassador, a compliment which, as mentioned before, was omitted by the now headless, and then unceremonious, capitan bashaw. A vast deal of talking and compliments, and presentations of letters, took place ; after which we were invited to depart with about as much ceremony as we had been invited to enter. Mustapha mentioned, that during our dinner the sultan had amused himself from behind a curtain in watching the repast ; and that one of the many female favourites was likewise employed in satisfying herself of the truth that heretics could eat with their fingers like men, and that we had not tails like monkeys. A belief in such an addition to infidel bodies is by no means confined to ignorant females of the East, for in the West, in South America, the same idea prevails amongst the Spaniards. A very handsome Englishwoman told me at Xalapa, a town about sixty miles inland from Vera Cruz, that she was tormented by crowds of women looking into her window when she went to bed, and that for the soul of her she could not discover the reason. When I told her my idea on the subject, which was in accordance with the general belief of the ignorant, she laughed heartily, and consulted her Spanish maid, who confirmed my opinion. The lovely Mrs. M. satisfied her domestic, that at any rate she was not one of Lord Monboddos's primeval females ; and that if she had been blessed with that necessary monkey appendage, it had been worn away by constantly sitting upon it.

We rode back in the same state as we arrived, wearing our cloaks, which we were told it would be disrespectful



to lay aside until we reached our abodes. The whole ceremony was concluded by noon; and at one P.M. we fired a salute, as the sultan passed the ship in returning to his harem, on the shores of the Bosphorus, to which place the greater part of his women had been removed the day previously to the arrival of the frigate.

It has been my lot in life to jumble much against royalty and their dinners, but certainly I never was at a feast so eminently entertaining as the sultan's; in which there was so much novelty, so much decorum, or so much hospitality. I shall defer a dinner-scene with the late empress-mother of Russia until a future chapter; and I will venture to affirm all will agree with me, that, overlooking the knives and forks, the Turkish banquet was superior to that of the empress.

Perhaps there is no one occurrence from which a stranger can form an accurate idea of national character equal to a public execution. I never was fond of visiting public executions; but in foreign countries one must see everything that is to be seen, and, therefore, when I heard that forty men were to suffer the bowstring, and their leader to be beheaded, I resolved, much against my inclination, to witness the scene. It had been found convenient to vote these poor devils pirates: the leader, who was possessed of the most dangerous article in Turkey (money), and who had long since retired (if he ever engaged in it) from being "a fisherman of men," as Lord Byron calls Lambro, was also voted some time or other to have been a pirate, and he therefore was condemned to be beheaded, and his estates were to be confiscated unto the crown. The fact is, the people in power wanted his money, and therefore took his head first; they might have compromised the business by cutting out his tongue and seizing his gold. Poverty and want of articulation would soon have relieved the state of their victim.

The ceremony was very unceremoniously performed, for they began before the time appointed; the shears of Atropos had closed before we arrived. The forty thieves were all bowstrung, and taken away; but the beheaded criminal was lying in the front of the execution-office.

with his head placed between his thighs, and only one human being near. Lord Byron looked with horror at the appalling scene. No man can form an idea of the distorted sight who has not seen it; and neither am I very much inclined to recall to my recollection the horrible appearance of the corpse. Not far from this exhibition (for the body was in the high road, exposed to the gaze of the curious public) stood a melancholy-looking Turk, endeavouring to scare away some dogs; but his attempts were fruitless, for, unmindful of our presence, they rushed at the body, and began lapping the blood, which still oozed from the neck. I never remember to have shuddered with so cold a shudder as I did at that moment; and Byron, who ejaculated a sudden "Good God!" turned abruptly away. It was altogether a scene never to be obliterated from a man's memory, and on a boy's mind it left the most unpleasant recollection. Those lines in the "Siege of Corinth," which some shudder at reading, and which few could ever scan with delight, are the vivid representation of the above anecdote:

" And he saw the lean dogs beneath the wall  
Hold o'er the dead their carnival;  
Gorging and growling o'er carcass and limb,  
They were too busy to bark at him."

Alp's mind is the delineation of Lord Byron's when he witnessed the scene:

" Alp turn'd him from the sickening sight."

We were decidedly out of luck in the event, for the executioner boasted of the clean cut by which the head was severed from the body. I was fortunate shortly afterwards, and my luck came when I least expected it. The bastinado is a punishment every man should see inflicted. It really is quite astonishing with what nonchalance a Turk sees his comrade undergoing the penalty of the law; the fact is, the scene is so common in Constantinople that no one cares a pin about it. Two of our boat's crew contrived to get embroiled with some Turks: neither party seemed to understand upon what point they differed; but differ they did, and one of our men seized a Turk by the turban,

which he shortly dislodged, and then began to slap the bald head of the Mussulman: this created no small disturbance, and the affair terminated by the interference of the police, who seized two of our infidels and lodged them in a kind of gaol in the market-place. I happened to pass, and was made to understand that something had occurred, and that our men were in durance vile. As I entered the place, I heard words much like the following:—“I say, Jack, what’s that Turk going to do to you?”—“D—n me if I know,” replied the other, “but he seems to have taken a fancy to my shoes.” I was just in time to see Jack thrown upon his back, and two stout Turks commence a regular hammering on the soles of his feet, with sticks resembling those carried by the janissaries. Jack roared in no common style, which seemed to excite the astonishment and contempt of the Turks; for they stand the bastinado with apparent indifference, accounting it an honour as well as a punishment, though they seldom solicit a continuation of such favours. My interference was sufficient to liberate both men, who limped away, and walked tenderly for about a week.

In Russia, after a man has been thrashed for half an hour, it is by no means uncommon to see the poor miserable slave crawl upon his hands and feet, kiss the shoes of his master, and then begin a long set speech, thanking the tyrant for the leniency of the punishment; confessing that he merited much more than had been inflicted, and finishing by calling upon God to bless so good and so mild a ruler. This is carrying civility rather too far; but the Russians are a courteous nation, and far exceed the Turks in gratitude, at least on this score: it would have been a rich contrast to hear “the curses not loud but deep,” uttered by our men, and the very kind, mild accents in which they devoted sultan, vizier, and populace, to the especial care of the devil.

## CHAPTER VIII.

WE were rich in adventures during our stay at Constantinople, and had ample time to avail ourselves of all opportunities to see strange sights; sometimes they came to us, instead of our going to them.

It was on a Sunday, the crew all neatly dressed, the awning spread, and that silence which distinguishes the sabbath on board a man-of-war in harbour, particularly remarkable. On the fore-castle, some one or two seamen walked up and down with measured step; some were to be seen on the fore-part of the booms, reading or sleeping. It was about three o'clock, the officers at dinner, the mid-shipman of the watch lolling over the taffrail, and the sentinels on the gangways measuring their posts in all the lassitude of the East, and the indifference conspicuous where discipline is relaxed, when a shout arose from the shore which turned every eye and ear to that direction. The confusion in the market-place, close to which the ship was anchored, was immense; the roar of tongues was as loud as the roar of waters in a gale; when suddenly a Turk appeared nearly covered with blood, a drawn sabre in his hand, with which he cleared his way, running towards the landing-place, and pursued by hundreds of his countrymen, who kept vociferating to seize the culprit, or to cut him down; the first would have inevitably led to the second. The pursued Turk leaped into the nearest boat with the agility and correctness of a sailor; for if you do not leap into the centre of a Turkish boat, you infallibly contrive to fall into the water, as they require the perfection of balancing. The Turk took the oars, and propelled the boat, with its long iron beak, against the sides of the frigate; and in spite of the menaces of the sentinel, the appearance of the bayonet, and the assembly of the ship's company, he sprang up the side, ran under the ensign-staff, and there, tearing off his turban knelt down, and made the sign of the cross.

This very shortly brought all hands on deck. Our astonishment was only equalled by the Turk's apparent want of it; he held to the ensign-staff, but he did not betray the least fear, or the smallest inclination to inform us of the reason of his uninvited company. In the mean time the tumult rather increased than subsided; every boat belonging to Pera seemed instantly on the water, and a scene of animation, fear, revenge, and impetuosity, occurred, which never could have been surpassed. Apprehensive that something more than met the eye might be the result, the marines were instantly placed under arms, to keep off the other boats, while that of the prisoner floated untenanted and unregarded by the Seraglio wall, drifting into the Sea of Marmora. In vain the first-lieutenant endeavoured to learn the cause of this unexpected visit; the Turk on board would not utter a word, whilst those in the boats bawled out in the purest Turkish an unintelligible mass of words, increasing in volubility and noise with their numbers.

We might have remained in this comfortable state of suspense until this day, had not Mustapha, who always was on the look-out to keep us clear of mischief (no sinecure, depend upon it), heard the noise, which might have been heard a league off, and came to our assistance. Before we let him come alongside, he was desired to warn the others off, and inform them that the case should be properly examined. It appeared that our Turk had, some time previously to this Sunday, lost a brother; that after various inquiries he had reason to believe that his brother had been murdered by one of a family, between whom and his brother a rankling animosity had long prevailed. Being perfectly satisfied of this himself, he secretly resolved upon a suitable revenge; which was merely the extermination, root and branch, of the hostile family; by which means he was sure of getting the right one, if his conjectures were well founded. It appeared, by what he afterwards confessed, that he began offensive operations before the present time, and had managed to give one of the brothers rather a longer swim than was convenient, for he never returned from that day, and t.l.l.

Sea of Marmora alone could prove that he was drowned. Day after day he watched, with unremitting attention, for an opportunity of decreasing the population of Pera, in which town the family resided. He had been balked of his murderous intentions until this Sunday, when the father of the condemned family was observed quietly discussing some coffee, and smoking away his fourth pipe, in all the silence and proper gravity of his sect, dreaming no more of death than of the Koran : the sabre was in his heart in a second, and only withdrawn to repeat the stab. The victim fell lifeless among his companions ; hence the hue and cry, the pursuit of the fugitive, and hence we were indebted to murder for adding another Christian to our numbers, and making another infidel.

This was a case of no trifling importance. The captain was on shore, and it would have been foolish in the first-lieutenant to land the man forcibly, especially when he saw the excitement amongst the Turks, and the certainty of another murder. The Turks in the boats alongside seemed sure of their prey ; the sabres peeped from their scabbards, and the impatience and ferocity of their looks increased with the delay. The son of the murdered man, who stood in perilous balance on the prow of the boat, sword in hand, took special good care to keep up the excitement by words and gestures. Our crew murmured a kind of acquiescence to the feelings of the Turks, and, had they been allowed to exercise judgment, the culprit would have swung to the fore-yard-arm in a trice ; for Mustapha would continue to translate the horrid imprecations of the son, who appealed to his fellow Turks for assistance, swearing by the blood of his father, which was visible on the caftan of the culprit, that he would have the murderer's heart to feed his dogs. We should have had a scene on board of no common kind, had not the first-lieutenant been prudent and determined. Our crew were commanded to stay before the break of the quarter-deck, which, in the moment of excitement and curiosity, they had ventured to cross. Order was resumed, and Mustapha placed upon the foremost quarter-deck carronade on the larboard side, to make a speech to

his countrymen, and to still the storm, if possible. He waved his hand, and in a moment the stillest silence prevailed; the oars were kept in the water to prevent the noise of the continual dripping. The turbaned host lent a listening ear towards the frigate, and the scene of fury and revenge for a moment was hushed into solemn repose.

Mustapha's speech was short, and amounted to this: — "That as the captain was on shore, it was requisite to keep the prisoner guarded until he should return; at the same time pledging his honour, which he backed up by appealing to Allah and Mahomet, that the wretch should not escape from the ship; that justice should be done, and the law respected." When Mustapha made a slight inclination of the head, as much as to say he had finished, and when the Turks found that the prisoner was not to be given up, a shout of "Allah il Allah!" rent the skies; they swore by all the ulemâhs, and all the muftis of the Sublime Porte, that they would have the criminal; and I blush to say, that they irreverently and profanely introduced an oath, swearing by the hump of the holy camel, and the beard of the sultan, that they would cover the murderer's head with the dust of their displeasure. This last oath is always kept as the grand wind-up of a Turk's anger; the sultan is not to be mentioned without awe — and his beard! — Heavens protect the rash man who speaks of that ornament otherwise than in the profoundest respect!

A mild answer turneth away wrath, it is truly said; and a ludicrous remark altered the face of affairs in the present crisis. It is customary with Turks and Persians to say that a man "has eaten much dirt," when the man is unfortunate, or has committed some error. In the hurry of Mustapha's translation, he said, "that the criminal *should eat* much dirt;" when one of our sailors remarked, "I'm blow'd if I don't think you are more likely to eat him." This produced a loud laugh, for it came out with all the dryness of an old tar, and was quite unexpected. The Turks seemed not a little disgusted with the ill-timed mirth; but seeing that all serious thoughts were for ever

gone from us, they retired themselves in good order, and never bothered us again. We placed the prisoner under proper surveillance, although we had no apprehensions of his deserting his protected quarters, and swimming on shore. The case was investigated by the proper authorities. Captain Bathurst declared he would not give the man up without a promise of pardon was first made ; and after various negotiations we landed the infidel murderer on the Scutari side, to pursue his further revenge, if he felt inclined, and to return to his own religion.

I have the greatest confidence in Turks in regard to honesty ; robberies are by no means frequent, and murders are not every-day occurrences ; but as in all populous places there must be some rogues, so we found that in the Sublime Porte they harboured some villains, and that we were not very far from being the objects of their plunder. Lord Byron had formed a party to visit the French minister at Bouyouk-déré, a village situated on the shores of the Bosphorus, and not far from the borders of the Black Sea. This village is the general resort of the diplomatists ; almost every ambassador has a house in that direction ; the ride is pleasant, and the view delightful. We rode out, and spent a very agreeable day. Amongst other modes of spending time, we got into a boat, and pulled into the Black Sea, — merely to say we had been there, and to notice the entrance into the Bosphorus. We began to face homewards before the sun had set, and progressed some distance, when Mr. Dale, the second-lieutenant of the *Salsette*, became suddenly indisposed ; and our guide and interpreter, the constant Mustapha, was left to convey him to Pera, by easy paces. As the sun had set, and, the twilight being of short duration, night was at hand, we galloped homeward.

We soon discovered that we had lost our way. On consulting together, we differed as to the road, and a division took place. Lord Byron, the purser of the *Salsette*, and myself, kept one indistinct road, whilst the others advanced towards a fire, round which some Turks were seated. We soon found out that we were wrong, and became more and more confused as to our route. The night



crept on: it was as dark as pitch. About eleven o'clock we called a halt again, to consider our situation. The evening was still: on our right was a kind of hedge, which seemed to enclose some cypress trees, and on the left an open field.

We had scarcely begun to talk, and that in a very low tone of voice, when we heard a whistle close to us; it was answered more in advance of us, and his lordship began to think we had got ourselves into no pleasant scrape; he whispered to us to keep quiet, and to follow him. He whistled exactly the same notes as we had at first heard, and, turning suddenly to the right, scrambled through the hedge, and found himself in a burying-ground. I never was much of a horseman, and a leap of common size would always throw me out in a hunt; but now, a Turk on one side, and a hedge on the other, left no time for fears. I faced the difficulty like a huntsman. My misdeed, in causing the Turk to be lashed aloft, came before me; and when I found myself dishonouring the graves of the Faithful, I concluded that no punishment was adequate to the crime of Christians violating the sanctuary of the dead, and galloping over the last reposing spot of the Mussulman.

However, over grave and turbaned stone we rode with alarming velocity, I keeping as near as possible to his lordship. We heard noises, or fancied we did, in every direction, but recovered breath and hope in emerging from the cypress enclosures, finding ourselves close to Pera. The other party arrived about an hour afterwards, and had tumbled into a scrape also. To Lord Byron's excessive coolness we were indebted for our escape; for gentlemen do not assemble in dark nights, in damp ditches, merely to whistle like nightingales to one another: neither do travellers jump over hedges, and stumble over tombstones, without being properly convinced that some danger is to be apprehended.

As newspapers are not common commodities in Turkey, we never heard who our friends were; but I recollect Mr. Adair remarking, that we were very well out of that scrape, and recommended us not to ride of dark nights near Pera for the future. I had to walk through the market-place

on my return to the ship; but never do I remember to have heard such howling and barking, even in a kennel, as I experienced in passing to our boats. Every stall in the market-place has about a dozen guardian dogs: the instant the stranger appears, for Turks are seldom to be seen by night, the whole pack come open-mouthed upon the intruders; the paper lantern, which every man carries, denoting the approach. After all, they are good-natured dogs, and verify the saying, that the dog which barks will never bite. We kicked them, thrashed them with sticks, probed them with swords, yet none of our men were bitten. Hy-drophobia is rare in Turkey.

I have very little to say for or against the beauty of the Turkish women: for my own part, knowing the difficulty of movement without observation in a strange city, where the costume is different, and where there is no probability of mistaking a hat for a turban, I do not place the most implicit faith in travellers, who unblushingly aver that they have broken through the sanctuary of the seraglio, taken sketches of the first favourite sultana's cage, and been obliged to play bo-peep when one of the eunuchs came to feed the turkeys; that, under the protection of a *gardener*, they had visited every room, and even had slight glimpses of the Circassian captives: I say, I do not exactly believe all this. Once, only once, I caught a sight of the face of a Turkish woman; it was with my captain and Lord Byron, walking in the suburbs of Pera. On passing an enclosure, not unlike a farm-yard to all outward appearance, and having the same kind of large wooden doors for admittance, we heard a laugh of some females; it was evidently close to us from the loudness of the sound. Lord Byron pushed at the gate, which creaked upon its hinges, and opened. We saw about six women, sitting in a circle, unveiled. The instant they observed us they covered their faces, and, starting like so many hares from their seats, ran away. The one on which my eyes fell I should describe as young, pale, pretty, and well-shaped,—large dark eyes, and rather thick pouting lips: it was, however, the business of a moment, and I am not inclined to give much credit even to my own eyesight. We know how difficult it is to be

certain of beauty at the smallest distance ; and in this case, the surprise at the sight, and the wandering of the eye from one to the other as they flitted away, might have deceived a young and eager boy ; but I am a very excellent judge of beauty, I flatter myself, and know when and where to admire and to praise it. In the streets of Constantinople, more especially in the bazaars, the women make a conspicuous figure. The first one I saw I mistook for a ghost ; she was robed entirely in white, with nothing visible but her eyes and her nostrils. She might have been Venus herself when uncovered, but she certainly offered very little for general observation.

The extreme jealousy of the Turks, in regard to their women, is well known ; and notwithstanding the splendid story of Anastasius, I should consider any attempt at intrigue as little short of positive madness — discovery would be certain ; and then follows the boat and sack for one, with no mark to know the grave, for the water tells no tale after the last expansive circle is lost ; and perhaps a dagger for the other : this would be preferable to the New Zealand law of retribution. In this island, when a woman is taken in adultery, she is stoned to death, and the man is fastened to a tree, in the midst of his friends, relations, enemies, and destroyers. The offended husband is asked what part he desires to have of his injurer ; one ear is generally taken as the most dainty morsel. This is instantly cut off, and eaten before the unhappy fellow, who sees his own ear gradually growing less, and who quietly waits until the next candidate settles which part he prefers. It is said the palm of the hands and the soles of the feet are particularly fine eating, decided luxuries in their way. In this manner the poor criminal is eaten by inches, or rather *feet* and *hands*, until he is near expiring, when he is killed, cut up, baked, and kept for the next day's dinner. One would imagine that such a punishment would be sufficient to deter the amorous from adultery ; but no ! all our desires seem to increase with the danger of gratifying them ; and hence adultery is common in both Constantinople and New Zealand. When it becomes a marketable commodity, as in this country, — why, then it is a mere business

of buying and selling, and has ceased to be a matter of wonder.

We had remained four months in Constantinople, before the ambassador had gone through all the forms of leave-taking, and was ready to embark. Our parting salute was fired, and we, not unwillingly, spread our sails to the cool breeze of the Sea of Marmora, directing our course, when clear of the Hellespont, towards the island of Zea, at which island we were to part with Lord Byron. It fell to my duty to land his lordship; and, in the discharge of this service, I had a warm and friendly shake of the hand from the first poet of the age, and received a handful of sequins to distribute to the boat's crew. Some Greeks took charge of his little luggage, for in this respect he was more slenderly provided than any traveller I ever knew. He turned towards the frigate, waved his handkerchief as an adieu, and then advanced into the interior of the island.

Every man who had the honour of Lord Byron's acquaintance, and who has since ventured before the public, has spoken much of his lordship's handsome appearance. As I consider beauty as only applicable to women, I would be understood here to attach the same weight to the word "handsome" that is generally given to beauty. I shall not place my opinion at variance with those who knew him a hundred times better than myself; but certainly the impression on my mind is, that he was by no means the *very* handsome man some have imagined him to be. Even Sir Thomas Lawrence's description to Mrs. Wolff is certainly not that of a regular beauty; for instance, he says, "the mouth well formed, but *wide*, and *contemptuous*, even in its smile: falling *singularly* at the corners, and its *vindictive* and *disdainful* expression, heightened by the *massive* firmness of the chin, which springs at once from the centre of the full under lip, &c.; the general effect is *aided* by a thin spare form, and, as you may have heard, by a deformity of limb." This deformity of limb, which annoyed him through life, was conspicuous to any man with eyes in his head; and it was perfectly impossible for any shoemaker to disguise the clump foot. I really can scarcely credit that his lordship was so mortified at this visitation

of Providence, when I have seen him thousands of times sitting on the taffrail, and swinging his legs about with unrestrained freedom. The fame which crowned his lordship in after-life made me anxious to remember his person and his manners, and I am quite satisfied that on board the *Salsette* he never took any particular pains to hide his feet. He certainly did not swim across the Hellespont in Hessian boots; and he dressed himself in the boat when he failed in his first attempt.

To return to the *Life of a Sailor*. The night was cloudy and dark, the breeze fresh, the ship under the guidance of an experienced pilot; and secure from rocks and shoals, from his knowledge, we rapidly passed the various islands. About midnight the pilot expressed himself to be thirsty, and went to the scuttle-butt, which stood just before the mainmast (for in those days we had these lumbering articles, to which was chained a tin pot), in order to gratify his desire. He had scarcely lifted the water to his lips, when a peal of thunder rattled over our heads, and the pilot was a corpse!—he was struck dead by the lightning! The vivid flash nearly blinded us, and the noise of his fall alone announced the calamity. He never spoke or sighed, but was dead in a moment. The ancients considered a man struck dead by lightning as a favourite of the gods; but the watch on deck by no means seemed to coincide in this opinion; for the second peal had roared over our heads before a sailor could be found valiant enough to remove the poor pilot from his sudden death-bed.

This was an awful night. These visitations of Providence are not lost on sailors, who are naturally superstitious, and easily frightened by unusual scenes. The watch on deck crept below, taking good care to avoid the guns; and when the officers of the watch called for a swab to be placed over the pumps, it was with great difficulty the carpenter of the watch could be found. On examining the corpse the next day, it was with the utmost difficulty the smallest wound could be observed; at last, a little black speck, about the size of a pin's head, was discovered on the left side of the body. It was then announced by the surgeon, with all the proper gravity of his

calling, that the pilot was dead (which we all knew hours before), and that the electric fluid having entered his body, caused his dissolution. We buried him the next day; and as this ceremony is one particularly awful on board a ship, owing to the smallness of the community, and the obligation of the attendance of every one, I shall not hesitate to give a description of the scene.

It is the business of the sail-maker to sew up the corpse in a hammock; and, consequently, he goes to the disagreeable task unhesitatingly, as it is his duty. The canvass is cut to fit the body and the head; and a sail-maker sits down to his work just as indifferently as if he were mending a rent in an old maintop-sail. The body, being shrouded in its last vestments, the canvass stitched tightly round, and two shot attached to the feet, is then left on a grating under the half-deck, covered over with a Union-jack. I have heard it said, that it was customary to run the needle of the last stitch through the nose of the corpse. It may or may not be the case (sailors are very curious people in their fancies); certainly I never remarked it, neither have I heard it mentioned as a general occurrence.

The bell began to be tolled at eleven o'clock. Of all sounds on board a ship, the unusual tolling of the bell is the most melancholy; and although a ship does not afford those spurs to holy meditations, like the interior of a church, where, seated in awful silence, the congregation wait the first burst of the organ to rise in solemn adoration, still there is a profound solemnity when that bell tolls its unusual melancholy toll, to summon us to the attendance of our last duty to a fellow-shipmate. I would instance here, that during a gale of wind, it is by no means uncommon for the bell to toll, owing to the hurried motion of the ship; and that no sound is so speedily stopped as that, it being considered rather a funereal accompaniment to the gust of the gale, or the roar of the sea.

The grating was now removed from the half-deck and placed in the lee-gangway, the corpse still covered with the Union-jack, the corner of which is made fast to the grating, which is secured by a rope. The officers stood behind the captain on the quarter-deck, while the crew

assembled on the gangways and on the after-part of the booms ; the messmates of the deceased placed themselves by the sides of the grating ; and when all were assembled, the bell was stopped, and an awful silence ensued. The officers and crew remained uncovered, and the burial service was commenced. This was read by the purser. for the captain rarely officiates ; indeed, with us in the Salsette, we were seldom called to the unpleasant attendance ; for we were healthy and never lost a man, even in action, while I was in her. At the part " Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God," &c. the following words are altered to " we therefore commit his body to the deep," a slight bustle occurred from the anxiety of the crew to catch a last glimpse of their fellow-creature ; a pause ensued in the service, until the messmates of the deceased performed the final service, by launching the corpse, grating, colours, and all, into the sea.

It fell with a deep and heavy splash. As the water rolled over the dead, the enlarging circles alone indicated the spot where the corpse had been deposited, the exterior line seeming an emblem of that eternity to which we had consigned it. The rustling noise of the water, as the grating was dragged through it by the progressing motion of the ship, alone disturbed the solemn silence of the moment ; and the eyes of the crew, which had been riveted on the corpse, still rested on the untenanted gangway, until the service was concluded. That finished, the ship's company retired to their usual avocations.

It is no less singular than true, that, while the corpse is on board, a feeling of respect is manifested towards the dead ; but the instant the ceremony of burial is concluded, the death and the man seem entirely forgotten, and make no more impression of awe and religion than the casual meeting a coffin in the streets of the metropolis. The sale of the dead man's clothes, which usually follows on the first day that the ship's company are mustered at divisions, erases him from the memory ; and his name only lives upon the ship's books, with D. D. affixed to it, meaning " discharged — dead ;" and in the purser's account-book. The common sailor has an opinion, not easily re-

moved that the first occupation of the purser, after he has replaced his prayer-book on the shelf, is to charge to the dead man's account some few extra pounds of tobacco; and this idea I believe to have originated on good foundation; for, in the early ages of the navy, all sorts of tricks were practised, to swell the debit side of the sailor's account, and to place money in the purser's pocket. Hence the saying in the navy, speaking of the talents of a purser, "O yes," says Jack, "he *is* a clever fellow, for he can make a dead man chew tobacco!"

There are no set of men so badly used as the pursers. Without the greatest economy, in small vessels, they are likely to be losers by their situations; and, if they do practise economy, they are reviled and hated, to a certainty; their lanterns wantonly kicked to pieces, and thousands of petty modes of annoyance resorted to, in order to injure their prospects. They are called *nip-cheeses*, "lantern jaws," with many other equally elegant cognomens, on board; and when they retire on half-pay, although they rank with a lieutenant, they have very little more than half of the latter's annual income, which, being about sixty pounds a year, is not sufficient to maintain them on shore in such respectability that they can keep up the acquaintances they may have made during their service afloat.

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## CHAPTER IX.

It is strange, but no less strange than true, that men who are accustomed to face every danger in war are oftentimes childish cowards in the dark. This species of timidity can generally be traced to the follies of a nurse, who, anxious to punish leniently the fault in her charge, consigns the blubbering boy to a dark closet, and then commences a very ridiculous story about Tom-o'-Poker coming down the chimney to take all naughty children to the dark-hole, and there make them sift cinders with their faces toward



the wind, so that all the dust is blown in the offender's eyes. First impressions are not easily removed, especially when the impression is made early in life. It is said a woman never forgets her first love — a child once frightened, will always retain a fearful remembrance of the scene. I was acquainted with a surgeon of the navy, who never recovered the shock occasioned by a very singular circumstance: he related the anecdote himself to me. During the war, and when trade flourished, and inn-keepers rejoiced, my friend, with a companion, both medical men, stopped to sleep in Canterbury. Not being the most affluent people, they contented themselves with an inferior, though spacious inn, and took one bed between them, either on the score of economy, or because the house was full. They slept in a room opening from a kind of gallery, from which branched off half-a-dozen similar apartments: about eleven o'clock they retired to rest, where I propose to leave them for a moment. In this inn numerous soldiers were billeted for the night, and the adjacent rooms to that occupied by the medical gentlemen had their portion of heroes to accommodate. It happened that early in the day a soldier had died, and had been placed, properly dressed for his coffin, in the room next to my friends. The coffin had been placed near the bed, standing on its end; and the soldiers who were to watch the corpse had gone below to fortify themselves against ghosts by copious libations of brandy.

About two in the morning, one of the medical gentlemen felt indisposed, and went down in order to get some negus. As he knew that the gallery contained many rooms, he left his door a little open, to be sure he made no mistake on his return, and groped his way to the staircase, down which he descended, got his negus, and, being perfectly confident of his way, returned without a light. When he arrived at the gallery, he traced his way along the wall until he came to a door ajar, which he imagined to be his. On entering the room, he directed his way to the bed, and, having felt his companion, was quite convinced he had not mistaken his room, undressed, and got in. He remarked, that as he accidentally touched his friend, he

was rather cold, and was astonished that he had not awakened him by the movement. He listened to hear if he was asleep, and not observing him breathe, began to speak, in order to arouse him. It was ineffectual: he resorted to manual labour, and turned the chilled body over, without obtaining an answer, or causing a remark. The unusual cold, the perfect stillness, and total inanimation, alarmed the doctor; he resorted to loud speaking, without success. Fearing his companion had suddenly died, he leaped out of bed, and, in endeavouring to find the door, ran against the coffin and upset it. The loud noise, as the empty tenement of the dead fell to the floor, hastened the return of the dead watchers, who were then coming up stairs, perfectly armed, as they thought, against ghosts or devils, or any thing else.

The doctor, quite overcome by the unexpected rencontre, remained standing erect, with merely his shirt and night-cap on, but in so tremulous a manner that a child might have pushed him into the habitation of the dead, which seemed open to receive him. He was thus situated when the soldiers entered. On their seeing the ghost, or what they fancied a ghost, standing at the head of the coffin, they gave a loud scream, dropped the light, and tumbled down stairs with surprising velocity.

The scream awoke the doctor's friend, who luckily began to ask the reason of the noise from his own room. The mystery was unravelled, to the dismay of both parties, and to the last day of my poor friend's life, the slightest allusion to this story seemed to hurry him towards his grave. In vain we rallied him on the folly of allowing past impressions of the mind daily to haunt him; and equally useless was our attempt to declare he ought never to fear death, as he had overturned one of his tenements. He lingered some few years, a timid, nervous, irresolute man, frightened at every shadow, unfit for society, and ruined in his profession. Perhaps some of my readers may here trace the pale doctor, who was a passenger in the *Fame*.

I have mentioned this anecdote to pave the way to another. We detained a Greek ship upon some suspicion or

other, which did not transpire in the midshipmen's berth. It was sufficient for us that she was detained. Like gamblers, we made sure of winning, without calculating the chance of losing; and to *detain* a ship, during the war, was another set of words for having captured a vessel. The prize was sent into Malta, under the command of a lieutenant, the *Salsette* continuing her course to join the admiral off Toulon.

In every ship in which I have either served or commanded, there was some record of a phantom. The foremast men are cruelly superstitious and credulous: hence the idea that a horse-shoe which has been used, nailed to the foremast, is lucky; a black cat or a parson invariably the reverse. A schoolmaster or a lawyer are detestable objects in the eyes of a sailor. Fear seems more easily communicated on board a ship than in other places. The report of any man having seen a ghost startles the rest, as electricity operates upon those who go hand-in-hand together. Our Greek ship not being subject to the most dreary wearisome occurrence in the world, "quarantine," entered Valetta harbour, and was properly secured for the night. The lieutenant who commanded her went on shore to dinner; and, having amused himself until about half-past eleven o'clock, returned on board in a Maltese boat. On ascending the side, he was astonished at finding the crew walking about in considerable agitation, and breaking through all discipline by herding on the quarter-deck.

"Holloa!" said the lieutenant, "what the devil is the matter now? How is it, Mr. F.," addressing himself to the midshipman, "that the men are not in their hammocks?"

"The men *say*, sir," replied the midshipman, who was a pale-faced, thin, spectre-looking youngster, "that they have seen a ghost!"

"Seen a what?" replied the lieutenant.

"A ghost, sir," said the youngster.

"A ghost!" said the lieutenant; "what, is it any thing like you? Here, you lumping, cowardly cur," said he, seizing hold of a tall, half-clad sailor, one of the stoutest men of the crew, who was shaking like a leaf, "tell me,

what is the ghost like? Is it a Greek, or a Turk, or a Christian? What did he say or do? Speak directly, or I'll soon find a way to make you."

It was quite in vain: not a word could he get from one of the crew, but that they had seen a ghost. One man declared that the unceremonious phantom got under his hammock, and, capsizing it, threw him on the deck; another swore to his having been cuffed by the shadow. But none could describe what it resembled — none could "shadow forth its likeness."

"Quarter-master, give me a light," said the lieutenant, "and let me see if I can find the ghost;" and, taking the lantern, he went down the main hatchway to hunt up the spirit. All was in confusion below: hammocks were upside down, blankets and beds on the deck, clothes of all sorts kicking about; in short, as much disorder as the contents of a dozen hammocks could create. In vain the lieutenant desired some of the men to come below to lift off the hatches. As no particular man was named, no one went: it was no service for volunteers, and many a man who would have faced a devil by daylight, found a ghost in the dark a very different thing.

After a fruitless search for some time, the lieutenant returned on deck. "Come here, my men," said he. "You see I have been below, and hunted fore and aft for your ghost, and cannot find him! How can you be such cursed asses, as to believe that a dead man, which a ghost must be, could turn you all out of your hammocks, pinch one, cuff another, and capsize a third? Will any man step forward and tell me he saw the ghost? Here, you lubberly fellow, you, Jackson, you have seen dead men by dozens; now, tell me, did you see it?"

This was a home question; and Jackson, after due consideration, and looking cautiously around him, during which it was quite amusing to see how studiously every one endeavoured to avoid being the outside man, replied, "that he certainly had not seen the ghost himself; and," added he, "I begins to think I have been *composed* upon."

Poor Jackson never composed a more fatal speech! It

was nearly the last he ever made. "Then set the example to these old women, and go down to your hammock."

"Ay, ay, sir," said Jackson, who, turning round, added, "come along, lads;" but the lads were by no means inclined to accept the invitation. His hammock was in the fore-peak of the vessel, consequently the very farthest part from the stern, from which situation no power could make the sailors budge an inch. He had not much clothing of which to divest himself; so, turning into his hammock, he began to court sleep.

But sleep is exactly at variance with a boarding-school girl; the former is not won by courting, but by excessive neglect. Half an hour had elapsed, and some of the crew began to think a snug hammock just as comfortable as walking, half naked, in the night air; indeed, from the continued conversation, a kind of confidence was partially restored. Boys whistle in a churchyard to keep up their courage, and horses are bolder when the rider sings. Men invariably grow more desperate as conversation increases. Each sailor seemed to understand the inclination of his neighbour, and although all were anxious to get to bed, no one was quite valiant enough to make the proposal to retire.

In one of the short pauses which ensued a violent scream was heard, and Jackson flew up the hatchway in his shirt, his hair standing on end, and his face the picture of terror exemplified. The crew instantly caught the alarm, and huddled together, like birds at the appearance of a hawk. Jackson was speechless; but the noise occasioned by the simultaneous movement aroused the lieutenant, who came instantly on deck.

"Well, Jackson," said he, "have you caught the ghost?"

The pale and affrighted face of the sailor struck his officer with indignation and disgust; and he looked at the spectre-stricken man with the keenest contempt. It often happens in Malta that a swell sets into the harbour, and boats which are secured to the stern wash against the counter, giving the boat a very unwholesome shake, and producing a noise by no means conducive to sleep. This was the case on the present occasion.

"Here, you old woman, you, Jackson; you are not fit to be called a sailor; go down and keep that boat clear of the counter," said the lieutenant.

To this order the sailor willingly acceded, as it placed him out of the reach of his spiritual and official tormentor; and had the order been to sit upon the truck, or ride cock-horse on the jib-boom, he would not have hesitated to comply, in preference to going below again. The agitation of the poor devil increased with the movement to obey the order; and scarcely had he got his feet on the Jacob-ladder, than he missed his hold in reaching the boat's painter, fell overboard, and sunk like a stone. It was but one splash, and Jackson was buried; he never rose to bubble his dying agony to his affrighted shipmates, and the distressing sight, too often seen, of men struggling against inevitable fate—the last uplifting of extended hands—the ineffectual attempt at speech—and the wild, despairing gaze, as they rise from the water to look for the last moment at all the world can show, were fortunately spared on this unhappy occasion.

The crew, sufficiently frightened before, were now the mere resemblance of men, with the hearts of children; and daylight was hailed with all the rapture of hope, long deferred, dawning at last. Poor Jackson's body was fished from the water the next day, perfectly black, and was interred on shore with all due honours. A host of priests, properly garbed for so solemn a ceremony, were paid for walking round the ship's decks with crucifixes and lighted wax-candles, although it was noonday; a certain quantity of holy water was sprinkled over the haunts of the spectre; prayers were said in Latin, of which neither ghost nor crew understood one word; and, strange as it may appear, the holy mummary restored the courage and confidence of the men, who believed the *spirit laid* in the far muddy waters of the Red Sea. They slept in their hammocks as usual, for never afterwards was ghost or goblin heard, felt, or seen.

The Salsette was ordered from the Toulon blockading squadron to Malta, and there the *Fame*, a seventy-four, becoming vacant, Captain Bathurst was appointed to her,

and I followed in his train. I confess I did not much like the change, for in those days a certain stigma was attached to midshipmen who belonged to line-of-battle ships, while the midshipmen of frigates were the aristocracy of their grade in the profession. As far as space was concerned, of course the change was beneficial. We were ordered home, and had the convoy signal flying ; but, previously to our departure, I must be allowed to give a sketch of a Maltese execution ; for there are no two countries under the sun who despatch their criminals in exactly a similar manner.

The Russians, an imitative nation, who always take example from their more civilised allies, when they hung five or six criminals to the walls of the fortress of St. Petersburg, bungled the business (as they do every thing but diplomacy and making soldiers), and down tumbled three in the mud, owing to the rope slipping in one instance, and breaking in two others. They grew the hemp, twisted the cord, and had an executioner in England to take lessons !

But Maltese are the proper finishers : a man must be an eel to slip through their fingers. A murderer (inasmuch as a young man, of about twenty-seven, thought proper to return the obligation of being brought into the world, by sending his parents out of it), having been tried, was found guilty, and condemned. Popular fury was fearfully excited, and the day of execution was impatiently expected. Like the rest, I felt a desire to see how a man could face death who had been guilty of so heinous a crime, that the Romans had no law which noticed it—*parricide*. There is a rising ground close to the Florian Gardens, which overlooks the harbour, on which was erected the hanging wood. It was in the shape of a pair of shears, the rope coming from the point where the two spars were lashed together ; the whole concern was evidently too near the ground, and we said in an instant that some bungling must ensue. Near the gallows was a chair, in which sat in quiet composure the only true friend—the man who never deserts you at the *last pinch*—the executioner. The procession of the criminal was headed by a company of boys, bearing

candles, and singing some solemn dirge, without any particular attention as to time or tune ; next came a set of friars, and monks, and priests, with a large assortment of the tag-rag and bob-tail part of the community. Then came one priest carrying a large crucifix, and close to him walked the criminal: the latter seemed the only unconcerned man in the procession. A respectable body of soldiers followed in the rear, ultimately taking up a circular position, with the gallows for a centre.

Prayers and spiritual consolation were freely offered, and there was no manifestation of indelicate hurry to put the offender from this world ; the crucifix was placed to his lips dozens of times, which he kissed without any particular fervency of devotion ; he did not join in the prayers, but looked about him more like a stranger to the scenery, than a condemned culprit ; once he looked over his head at the apparatus, but with a kind of indifference truly appalling.

His time was come — his hour arrived — and the last preparations commenced. The rope was placed round his neck ; but it appeared to me, that, instead of a hangman's knot, they substituted a timber-hitch, and then jammed the parts. The criminal was desired to stand upon a chair, and no sooner had he obeyed the order than the executioner shortened the rope a very little, and removed the chair : down fell the poor fellow with quite enough of a jerk to tighten the hitch, but not enough to cause suffocation: the rope being too long, the toes of the man just touched the ground, by which he was enabled to retard the operation of strangulation. The priest prayed devoutly keeping the crucifix to the culprit's mouth : he only thought of prolonging his miserable existence another and another moment. Strange how we cling to life when life would be a burthen, and how we shun death, which would be our only release !

The executioner became quite astonished that the man did not die ; and after giving him every opportunity for five minutes, he ascended the gallows, and then descended the rope, planting his feet on the neck of the criminal with cold-blooded barbarity he then proceeded to jump on



the shoulders ; and never do I remember to have turned so suddenly sick, as when I heard the cracking of the neck at each succeeding jump. This operation stretched the rope, and the culprit's feet came firmly on the ground. The resistance to yield his life was awfully great, and he would have struggled much longer, had not a second executioner lifted the legs from the ground, which gave the body a slanting direction, and soon closed the horrible and disgusting scene.

This made a proper impression upon me, more especially as I was given to understand that one or two gentlemanly people had expressed a wish that they could get hold of a midshipman belonging to the *Fame*, in order to allow their bungling executioner an opportunity of perfecting himself in the art of hanging. I could not blame the Maltese for their charitable wish ; we certainly gave abundant annoyance to the quiet, orderly people ; for it was by no means uncommon to get up a chorus in the streets loud enough to bring the good people to the windows, and then they were laughed at for their trouble.

But we had another mode of annoying the pious, and in these frolics we were always headed by a certain individual who was then a midshipman, and who is now a captain. At every corner of every street in Malta, and indeed in most Catholic towns, the saints who are placed in the niches to be saluted by the passer-by in the day-time, return the civility by night, as they hold lamps to direct and guide both saint and sinner. It was an odd and very improper frolic, but so it was, that these lamps were sure to be broken at least once a week, and the saint was fortunate if he were not damaged or disfigured during the operation.

It was not to be supposed that the Catholics could allow the images to which they bowed and crossed themselves about fifty times a day, to be wantonly insulted by beardless heretics, without resenting the injury, and consequently they were fully prepared to take suitable revenge on any good opportunity offering itself. Our leader having taken a great fancy to the unicorn, which stands on one side of the grand entrance into the church of St. John, to place as

a figure-head to his brother's yacht, he resolved to have the animal, and his refractory crew were desired to be in attendance the next night, in order to dislodge the cornuted creature. We were punctual to our appointment, and proceeded to the sacrilegious demolition at midnight with light hearts and a strong rope. The latter was placed round the unicorn's neck, and about ten of us began with a true sailor-like "one, two, three, haul," to dislodge our victim. It was, however, so well fastened on its pedestal, that we did not succeed, and our shouting and hauling soon awakened our enemies. We began to perceive a collection of people in the Strada Reale, and had little doubt that they would shortly commence offensive operations, as they were loud in their vows of vengeance against the ruthless spoliators of their magnificent and sacred edifice. A large knot of Maltese began to show themselves at the corner of the Strada St. Giovanni; thus blocking up the direct road to the boats, and partially enclosing us. We knew the depth of a stiletto wound, and the unerring accuracy with which it is thrown: we well knew how cordially they hated us, if only in a religious light. Their saints held their lamps, for a wonder, unbroken that night, which gave us more alarm than our enemies and their stilettos; for had we been recognised, the admiral's displeasure would have preceded the sentence of the civil judge. We hastily dropped the rope, and in a firm and compact body charged the party by the corner of the Strada St. Giovanni. They very feebly resisted, and we reached our ship in security.

The Maltese, balked in their vengeance upon us, like cowards as they invariably are, notwithstanding their historical records and valiant knights, wreaked their vengeance on two of our half-drunken crew, who were on shore, and the next morning they were found dead in the Strada Ponente. From the situation, and the known immodest character of the street, the Maltese authorities argued that intrigue excited the jealousy of some husband, and that the loss of life was the result. The Lord bless their sapient heads!—sailors do not intrigue. Jack has no time for poesy and love elegies; and we doubt much if Mr. Haynes

Bayly, with all his musical melodies, could find the time for caterwauling if he were a sailor ; and, after all, liberty and the first-lieutenant are monstrously against the carrying a tender scheme into execution.

We sailed from Malta with our convoy, and touched at Gibraltar. With what delight I visited the convent, may be easier imagined than written. I had not forgotten the beautiful creature there ; and whilst at Constantinople had provided attah of roses and supposed Cashmere shawls for the dear object of my early affections. It was the last time I ever saw her as a spinster ; and I left her with all the regret of a young and ardent mind, perfectly persuaded that I was desperately in love, and quite unable to outlive the separation. I am, however, much afraid, from some circumstances which have occurred, that I possess one of those quicksilver hearts on which no permanent foundation can be laid. I certainly have been a particular admirer of beauty ; and while I join cordially in the opinion of Lord Byron, that " a pretty woman is a welcome guest," I will not answer for my constancy, if another fairer object should accidentally appear. But in a sailor's life love should never appear : we are, I believe, generally reckoned the best husbands ; but as for constancy, when the wide Atlantic rolls between the divided hearts, it might be a very good subject for rhyme, but a very poor one for reason. It is quite astonishing how ship discipline, employment of time, and the yellow fever can keep down love and affection, and all such tender expressions. I have no more confidence in a sailor's constancy, than I have in the pope's infallibility, and I regard both as mere matters of opinion, very well to talk about in society, but quite discarded in reality by all but lovesick boarding-school girls or anxious cardinals.

Our passage was tedious and disagreeable ; for there is no penalty inflicted by the law equal in annoyance to an anxious man taking a passage in a ship condemned to convoy a fleet when the wind is fair and strong, and when every idea of home becomes doubly exciting. Instead of spreading the wide sail to catch the freshening breeze, the topsails are lowered on the cap, reefs taken in, and perhaps,

which is worse than all, the ship "hove-to" for an hour for the sternmost vessels to close round the commodore: it is a kind of blank in life; even hope for the time is destroyed: a sort of epileptic fit. Of all the curses in a sailor's life, a convoy is the worst.

The quarantine which we endured for three days at the Motherbank, were three days lengthened into three years; every moment seemed an hour. In vain we traced with our glasses the delightful shores of the Isle of Wight, or looked at the moving scenery in the Southampton Water; there we were, cooped up like so many chickens, fed at stated times, and allowed to gaze through our bars at what we could not enjoy. Had quarantine been invented in the time of Job, I doubt much if that pattern of patience and piety would have ridden forty days under the yellow flag, near the fertile shore of Sicily, without giving vent to his feelings in no very measured terms. Quarantine is decidedly a strong invention of our two natural enemies, the devil and the doctor, to enfeeble our bodies and ruin our souls. Abrogation of that law would do infinitely more good than half the methodist trash ever published.

I was removed from the *Fame* to the *Arethusa*, and I parted with my old captain with all the poignancy of real regret. To me he had been a father, a protector, and a friend: he was a kind-hearted, excellent, brave man, universally beloved and respected. He died as a sailor ought to die, in battle, and victorious. The shot which struck him at Navarino deprived the poor of a friend and the helpless of a supporter.

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## CHAPTER X.

EVERYBODY has heard of the *Arethusa*:—she is immortalised in song, and was for many years one of the crack ships of his majesty's navy. I considered it a feather in my cap to belong to so dashing a ship; and anti-

pated honours and rewards, prize-money and the Gazette. "All pleasures preconceived or preconcerted," says Dr. Johnson, "end in disappointment." That was a wise man, and some of his sayings might stand by the side of Solomon's.

I saw just enough of home this time more bitterly to feel the parting. I had become, it is true, more accustomed to my profession; but I always considered it as one only fit for a waterdog; and have more than once thought that the prophecy concerning the Arabs is applicable to a sailor—"He shall be a wild man, and be a stranger in the midst of his brethren." My sisters gave me a little more of honour and glory, and I felt again the warm caress of my mother, when she took her parting kiss from one, I trust, who has always been an affectionate son.

We were destined for the coast of Africa. That sink of human life was then a kind of undiscovered shore. The business of the war—the rapid change of more interesting intelligence—the battles, fires, and wrecks which daily filled the papers, left no time, or rather damped curiosity, as to the actual situation of our colony in Africa. I am not aware that the humbug practised by Macgregor, in reference to Poyais, was resorted to in behalf of Sierra Leone. We may all remember the magnificent prints published, descriptive of the theatre and the palace of Poyais. I have visited this spot; but never could discover the ruins of these beautiful specimens of architectural designs; and well I know the inhabitants of those parts are by no means disposed to labour in the removal of stones.

We sailed, cleared the Channel, touched at Madeira and Teneriffe, thence to St. Jago, in the Cape Verd Islands. Here we took in fresh provisions, fruit, and water, and increased our crew by two monkeys and a paroquet. I have never seen a good account of St. Jago. The fact is, very little can be said about it; and George Cruikshank's pencil would convey its present state much more definitely to the mind than all the memorandum books of the navy. A St. Jago soldier is a rare mixture of pride, nudity, and discipline; for a cocked-hat he would sell his wife; but he is seldom so far fortunate in his traffic; for the women in

St. Jago seem to follow the same plan in defying the mosquitoes as the rhinoceros in Shangella, which rolls in the mud, to defend itself against the small but powerful stings of the fly of that country. Only fancy a fly capable of penetrating the skin which defies a musket-ball ! I believe it, nevertheless, for I have seen men who declare they have been bitten through top-boots by mosquitoes, and certainly they are searching animals.

A soldier at St. Jago who has a *complete* musket, is the envy of the army. It, generally speaking, happens that the man who has a barrel has no lock, while another will have a stock, lock, and bayonet, but no barrel : one part is always lashed on to another, the proper fastenings having long since disappeared. Yet have they guard-houses, and officers of the guard ; and no pen could possibly give an idea of the motley group when the command, "Guard, turn out," is given : some appear with an old Portuguese uniform coat, without hat or trousers ; some with cocked-hats, shoes, and trousers, but no coats : these are the front-rank men ; the officers are only a shade, and that not in cleanliness, better. The "*present arms*" is a salute to laugh at for a year afterwards. Like the poor, they are always proud : no infringement of their law is allowed ; and in this respect they might rival better dressed soldiers. They are vigilant on their posts, but seem otherwise blessed with the laziness of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. The governor's palace would make a good convertible cow-house, and the other residences are wooden huts, with or without roofs.

The island appears perfectly barren, mere rock ; and, although I have visited the interior in several shooting expeditions, yet I do not remember to have seen one cultivated spot, except in the vicinity of the town. Cocoa-nuts, bananas, plantains, the common pine-guavas, and the orange, are plentiful. Those who have visited these climates are of course aware that very little cultivation is requisite to bring these fruits to perfection. The islands in the vicinity are infinitely superior to St. Jago ; but they are deficient in that which aggrandised the capital — a good harbour. St. Jago, like a woman's mind, arrived at

its utmost limit early in its existence—it never has improved—and never will, until it changes its master. From this wretched abode we steered to Goree.

I before said there was no place to cure fastidious gentlemen equal to a midshipman's berth. In this fancy frigate we were pretty well off, and, in many respects, might have benefited our captain. It is, or was, the usual custom in the navy, for the midshipmen of the morning watch to breakfast in the cabin. The officer of the forenoon-watch, one of the idlers (in this energetic expression is included the purser, doctor, master, and those time-devouring men, marine officers), received an invitation to dinner with the captain; and an invitation was a command. I have known a midshipman flogged for refusing to dine with the lieutenants: indeed, I was once very nearly flagellated for the same heinous offence. It certainly does appear tyrannical to punish a boy for not dining with those he does not admire. This is a mistake—it is one of the very many small branches of discipline which invigorate the whole tree. On another score the boy would merit chastisement; for there is no folly like allowing pride to stop supplies to the empty stomach of a midshipman, and folly ought always to be punished.

In the *Arethusa* we ran no risk of being flogged for refusing an invitation. The steward seldom peeped into the berth, saying Mr. F., Captain C. *desires* the *pleasure* of your company at dinner. It was no pleasure for him to see us there, and we rather lost than gained by the invitation. I am free to admit that this niggardly mode of living—the burgoo breakfast (burgoo is oatmeal and water jammed into a small consistency), and salt junk dinners—accustomed us to bear the misfortunes which afterwards befell us. Gluttony brings with it its own punishment; the more you eat, the more you desire to eat; and the drunkard, who, by his wine-bibbing propensities, hastens the fever which intoxication produces, occasions a thirst which no draught can allay, and which again inflames, rather than cools, the desire. We were not guttons or wine-bibbers in that ship.

Our approach to the coast of Africa we smelt, rather

than saw. The breeze of the evening came deliciously perfumed with the strong scent of the lime-tree ; we smelt the shore, hours and hours before we saw it. It is very amusing to observe dogs on these occasions : being more gifted than man, they make the land in imagination before the navigator ; they run to the weather-gangway and port-holes, sniff up the breeze, and howl most intellectually, looking round and wagging their tails, as much as to say, " Why, can't you smell it ? " Pigs are particularly happy on this occasion.

In due time we anchored in Goree roads. From the ship the town looked handsome, and the adjacent country appeared clad in verdure ; but the sun was oppressive beyond measure, and the breeze, which blew, but did not cool, seemed as if it had been puffed from an oven. On landing, we found the street one moving mass of sand ; the mosquitoes flew at us with the ravenous hunger of half-starved dogs. Our stockings, for we were fools enough not to wear boots, were dyed in blood ; and the eternal irritation occasioned by the sting, and the scratch which followed, would have brought on a fever without the assistance of the fiery noonday-heat, or the checked perspiration of the cooler evening. We were fairly beaten back by those human tormentors, who seem to know their power, giving as much annoyance by their ceaseless buzz, the prelude to the bite, as when they inflicted their tiny but smarting wound.

Our men, who had long been fed upon salt provisions, required some variation of food ; and as it is usual, if possible, to blend health and utility together, we determined upon a fishing-party. Every ship in the navy is allowed materials for this sport.

Long before daylight the next morning fourteen men, under the command of a lieutenant, were despatched from the ship, with orders to try a sandy beach to the southward of the town. I was on this occasion the midshipman of the boat. It was a long flat beach, terminating in some sand-hills, behind which the parched ground appeared, relieved by occasional patches of refreshing green spots. On this beach we landed, and carried out our nets, accord-



ing to all rules of fishermen. It was hardly day-dawn when we commenced, and we could not discern a human creature within the sweep of our sights. The net was hauled with all due care not to risk our legs near the voracious jaws of the ground-shark ; for this species of fish, unlike its brethren, care not for the noise or break of the surf.

No sooner, however, had we begun to get the end of the net in our hands, and the fish began to leap, than a cloud of naked blacks rushed over the sand-hills. They came in swarms, headed by a tall, respectable-looking man on horseback, who was partially covered, as respects garments. He had a mild, benevolent cast of countenance ; but *fronti nulla fides*. Lord Byron remarks, that he had his pockets picked by a man of the most gentlemanly appearance, and that he never remembered so mild a looking person as Ali Pacha. The leader of our foes was as treacherous in appearance. No white squall in the Mediterranean ever more astonished the unguarded mariner, than these locusts of destruction astounded us. They whizzed by us with the velocity of antelopes, and, jumping into the water, regardless of the danger — for

Fools rush in, where angels fear to tread,

they seized the fish as they jammed them against the meshes of the net, threw them on shore to their companions, who piled them up in different heaps, and walked off with them with as much nonchalance as if they were not committing a theft. There was a ground-shark in the net ; and for once robbery passed unpunished. Had that shark but taken one black leg, I would willingly have given the rest of the fish to witness Justice in the great execution of her office.

Our arms, such as we had, were in the boat ; but the panic was so universal, that I doubt our having put the cartridge into the muskets the right end downwards ; besides, all but two men were on shore. In vain we attempted to take a fish ; the benevolent gentleman pointed at us with a long reed, and we were instantly deprived of our just right. Opposition was useless ; they could have

killed us and eaten us in five minutes ; the only thing was — how to get out of the cursed scrape we had so unintentionally fallen into. Hitherto, with the exception of confounding the *meum et tuum*, no act of hostility had been committed : but when the net was drawn on shore, and we were preparing to place it in the boat, a very different scene took place. The fish had every one been removed but the shark, and no one seemed inclined to touch him. A shark's tail is nearly as bad as his jaw ; and the sable tribe seemed well enough to know the danger of approaching either end. Out of as full a net as any fisherman could wish to see, we had not one fish for our pains. The beach was cleared, and the men began to group together, — to talk loud, — their hands were held in the air, — such gesture was furious, and it required no conjurer to see that every moment increased our danger. A minute seemed hardly to have elapsed, and all the marauders were armed. It was like magic : the lances had been regularly distributed amongst the sable tribe almost unseen : and they began to dance and kick up the sand in frightful wildness.

The affair began to wear a very serious aspect. The ship was hull down in the distance, and from her no possible assistance could be expected, or could arrive in time if sent. Four of our men were now in the boat, and had coiled away the sean ; and I, in spite of ground-sharks, had placed myself in the stern-sheets, and forthwith began to prepare for action, by loading the fire-arms. In the mean time, the men one by one got into the boat, always taking especial care to keep her afloat. The last man was the lieutenant, and a gallant fellow he was as ever breathed. His self-possession had entirely returned ; his orders were given without any emotion, and he remained facing his foes singly, and at some distance from us. It was evident that the blacks had not matured their plan ; for they looked on in silent indifference the moment we began to retreat ; but as our numbers lessened on the shore, they advanced towards the boat. When the lieutenant first stepped into the water, the whole tribe could nearly have touched him. I would not have given twenty cowries for his chance of life. He faced our foes, retreating

backwards towards the boat ; and no sooner had we hauled him in, and given the boat good stern-way into deeper water, than the whole gang of thieves commenced their war-whoop. They stamped like enraged bulls, and positively yelled with anger ; they then made a rush into the water to seize the boat ; unfortunately we were in the act of *winding* her, and had barely executed that operation, when two of the foremost blacks seized hold of the rudder. The depth of water impeded their advance, or we must have been captured. Our lieutenant commenced actual war, by beating the intruders on the head with the tiller ; the crew plied the oars ; and the water being too deep for the blacks to exercise much power, they relinquished their grasp, and we were free. The boat surged ahead, and we breathed in comparative safety.

The whole tribe now rushed into the water, brandishing their long lances over their heads, and shouting most vehemently. On our side the spare hands pointed the muskets, while the crew “gave way” with their utmost strength. The horseman interposed, and stopped the hostile demonstration. He seemed to know that the advantage was now on our side, for one minute would have placed us out of reach of their arms, while we could have shot them at discretion. Suddenly their lances were poised in the air ; they turned quickly round, and simultaneously retreated. They flew over the sand-bank, and vanished almost as suddenly, and certainly more welcome, than they appeared.

There are some people who never will benefit by example, but will buy their own experience at any price : we had plenty of those on board who sneered at our apparent want of courage in allowing the plunder of the fish, declaring that the report of a musket would have frightened the whole tribe : but Voltaire says, “Cannons no longer astonish the Indians.” In short, we had lots of volunteers for the next day. I was not one, neither was the lieutenant. I had seen quite enough of the fishing party, and thought myself extremely lucky not to have been a slave for life : but others, willing to face danger, and undismayed by our reports, resolved to fish

on the same beach at the same hour. One man of our party was taken (he did not *volunteer*) to point out the spot; and the next morning away they went, with two marines to frighten the horde. Unluckily for our laugh, the savages came from their concealment before the boat touched the shore; and no sooner did our valiant successors see the white beach suddenly black, than they turned tail, and pulled back again, leaving their honour and their courage behind them. This was a sufficient warning to me, and I hope to others, never to undervalue either the courage or the service of my neighbour. Men accustomed to death, as sailors are, know what danger is, and are not frightened at shadows (excepting always a ghost). Brute courage belongs to every man, more or less. It is the cool calculator in the hour of danger who is the really brave man, and not the headstrong fool, who rushes without thought into inevitable destruction. There is a wide difference between drunken temerity and determined courage: one is as fatal to itself as the other is to its opponent.

To give any idea of the mode of living amongst the blacks of the African coast would be a waste of time. Imagination cannot picture people more purely in a state of nature than the poor half-starved naked negro. His food is principally vegetables, yams, cocoas, &c. relieved by occasional fruit, such as the guava, banana, and plantain. His life is one of continual slavery even in his own country; and should his tribe be invaded, and himself made prisoner, it merely makes his situation about two degrees more dreadful, with all the chance of being benefited hereafter; for should he be sold again to those who traffic in human flesh — logs of mahogany, as they are entered in the bill of lading — and survive the sea voyage, he becomes in the west a slave it is true, but a man, and not a brute; his mind is by degrees enlightened: he has his hut and garden; a doctor if he is ill, and food if he is hungry. Since my visit to the coast of Africa, and my residence in the West Indies — that is to say, when I commanded a ship on that station for three years; and since I have seen with my own eyes the sleek, well-fed

negroes, well-clothed, well-housed, married, and contented, I have become one of those who believe that sudden emancipation would be instant starvation.

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## CHAPTER XI.

THE principal object of our cruise was the suppression of the Slave Trade; and at the time I was unfortunate enough to be in the *Arethusa*, this traffic was at its height. The Americans were the great carriers; and not unfrequently English ships, under the transatlantic flag, and with American clearances, prowled about the sickly coast, to ship the victims of oppression to a foreign shore.

Some intelligence of slavers having reached us, the *Arethusa* suddenly put to sea, and proceeded to the islands De Los, between which we sailed; first running down before the wind, then beating up to windward again — capital exercise for the ship's company, and very amusing, as we had better opportunities of making remarks on the various islands. It was nearly sunset when we discovered an English brig lying near the Factory; and, as we knew our countrymen were just as fond of negro slavery as some of those who now spout the most vehemently against it, we bore up in chase. The wind was fresh, and the ship under a crowd of canvass. We had passed through the passage twice before during the day, and the navigation, as laid down in the Admiralty charts, appeared perfectly safe, and free from rocks or shoals. I was standing on one of the forecastle carronade-slides when the ship struck. Every man was on deck in a moment. The ship had been running at the rate of eight knots, and the shock was terrific: then was to be seen, fore and aft, countenances expressive of fear and horror; then came the momentary confusion, which even discipline could not control: and then the hurried order which none could obey. The sea which followed the ship lifted her, and, roaring past, left us amidships on the

rock: she struck this time about two feet abaft the step of the main-mast, which threw that mast so far forward as to leave the stays in bites. When she surged again, the masts flew back to their proper positions with a jerk, which shook the ship fore and aft, and carried away the main-top-gallant-mast. The sea, which had placed us in so uncomfortable a situation, was superseded in kindness by its follower, which lifted us off again; but in the downward surge the rudder came in contact with the rock, and was forced in spite of wood-locks,—being lifted so completely, that the rudder-head came against the underpart of the quarter-deck. This created a different confusion; for the captain's library, consisting of some six odd volumes, and crowned with a box of plums, which an American captain had bestowed some few days ago, went right and left, some tumbling downward to the rudder-coat, and some jammed against the deck. The captain loudly called out, "to let go the anchor;" but this was instantly and fortunately countermanded by the first lieutenant, who wisely remarked, that we should anchor on the shoal, and the land wind would swing us on the rock. The ship was afloat; and the rudder being useless, the sails were worked as the first-lieutenant, who was a thorough, expert, and practical sailor, directed: the captain, like a good boy, repeated the order; and we were again free.

"Sound the well!" It was sounded; and the carpenter reported the ship to have sprung a leak at the rate of six feet an hour. The chain-pumps were instantly rigged and worked; a fruitless examination took place below: the water was started, and the ship directed towards the Factory. An hour's hard work before we anchored gave us a very full opportunity of estimating the horrors of severe and continued exertions in a climate like that of the coast of Africa. Few can imagine the hardships men undergo, who, in spite of the general lassitude of warm climates, are constrained to toil, and toil, suffering from thirst and heat, from hunger and unre-mitted labour: the time was come, and our sufferings had barely commenced. The leak at first was thought to have

been overrated ; but when the ship increased her rapidity of motion, the water rushed in greater quantities through the apertures, and we found that it was rather under than over estimated. In the hurry and confusion of our unfortunate situation, we came to an anchor close to the brig, and made a prize of her ; it being quite clear to us that she must have been waiting for slaves, and we were in want of an empty vessel in which we could place our stores.

I have endeavoured up to this point to make myself as amphibious as possible : the mere evolutions of a ship, the interior arrangements, the nautical expressions, would soon pall on a landman. Even Marryat, who wrote in my opinion the very best naval novel ever penned, "The King's Own," has found it impossible to keep to nautical scenes ; and the "Post Captain," a most excellent specimen of nautical life, has wisely painted the beauty of Cassandra, and made most of the interesting scenes occur on shore. Now I must become a sailor : a wreck, a gale of wind, and a distressed ship must be sung or said in a sailor's jargon. Ours was a night never to be effaced from memory : it gave me an insight into what human labour and human resources could accomplish ; and I might have cruised until this day in the Salsette, and never have seen a night of such horrors and death, of sleepless anxiety, continued labour, and multiplied misfortunes.

It became a doubt when we anchored, if the ship could be kept afloat during the night ; and had we not received about a hundred blacks from the shore, we must have seen the *Arethusa* sink under us before the dawn of day. As the sable tribe could turn a winch as well as an able seaman, the whole of the reinforcement were placed at the pumps, while our own crew were divided into different lots : some were sent to bring the brig alongside ; some furled the sails, and sent the top-gallant-mast on deck ; others were making preparations for getting the guns and provisions out ; some hoisted out the boats on the booms ; whilst others prepared for disembarking the powder.

The ship was in fair discipline enough : the first-

lieutenant was worth his weight in gold, having been one of those unfortunate, duly-appreciated men, whom the Admiralty consider they *lose* as good first-lieutenants, when they promote them to commanders. The other officers were active, enterprising men, and the ship's company was excellent; otherwise our fate would have been different — for much I doubt the talent and ability of our captain to command, and solely direct on this occasion: he seemed to know his own insufficiency, and became a very good echo of his inferior officer's orders — a kind of speaking-trumpet in the first-lieutenant's hands.

Misfortunes never come alone. We were progressing fairly in our work, when an enemy in the shape of the elements began to appear. It was a beautiful starlight night, the moon shone brilliantly, the wind was gentle, and the sea as smooth as a duck-pond: about ten o'clock, a small black speck in the east soon extended itself into an awful thunder-cloud; it seemed an instant only, and the whole horizon was darkened — “The sky was changed; and such a change!” The brightness of the night had passed away like a dream, and a tornado was about to supply its place. We knew not the force of the foe; but the cheering cry of — “Bear a hand, lads, before the squall comes!” indicated too certainly the presages of the officer's mind. It fell to my lot to be ordered to land the powder in the yawl, having as few hands only as were absolutely requisite for the labour required. My orders were to place it in an empty house which the crew of the brig had inhabited; and seeing that the darkening cloud increased apace, and was rapidly approaching, I was anxious to get clear of my charge, or, at any rate, to reach the shore before the squall burst. We had not a hundred yards to go, and scarcely had we “shoved off” when the forked lightning began to show itself in quick and vivid flashes, while the loud roar of the thunder increased as it neared the ship. We had a tarpaulin in the boat to cover the powder-barrels; but this was no security against the lightning. The boat appeared not to move. No sooner did I look with eager eye to the shore, than an anxious glance was cast at the coming enemy; then



would I double bank an oar, and pull and tug with all my strength, whilst I cheered my little crew to an additional exertion.

We landed the very moment the storm burst. Heavens!—no poetical imagination could convey the hurried and varied feelings of that moment! To secure the boat was our first endeavour, which we effected by placing her firmly on the beach, and taking the painter to a neighbouring log. The trees groaned as the whirlwind whistled through the long branches; and the rain fell, or rather came from the clouds, with the force of water ejected from a fire-engine. The long cocoa-nut bent like a bow its branchless trunk, surging about its leafy head in the storm; and the lightning, which flashed in horribly quick succession, only showed the wreck of ruin which surrounded us, leaving us in tenfold darkness. The ship, which we saw through the momentary flame of fire, appeared a mass of ropes; the yards were hanging in different directions; the fierce wind swung her about as easily as a man might move a cradle; and the flash, which showed her broadside on, would be succeeded in the moment by another which showed her bow to the shore. The instant lull, before the loud wind and hoarse roaring of the elements resumed their fury, only rendered audible the confusion on board the ship and the brig; and the succeeding flash exhibited its own power, as it rent the main-topmast from top to bottom: a prolonged existence of a moment's light showed us the fishes of the mainmast rent from their iron fastenings.

The time elapsed since the commencement of the squall was about ten minutes, when a calm, as tranquil as an infant's sleep, succeeded the storm. The sky assumed its former serenity, the moon and stars again shone. Few could imagine, who had not witnessed it, the desolation and ruin of an African tornado. We imagined our miseries at an end, and cheerfully resumed our labours. Delusive hope! for soon, too soon we found the evil had but commenced, and that Fortune, already unkind, only smiled for the moment, to make her frown more severely felt. In the meantime we availed ourselves of the calm.

The negroes still worked at the pump, and our nautical term of "Spell oh!" gave way to some elegant word in the black vocabulary. A party of hands were employed to thrumb a sail—a process by which canvass is converted into a mat; this was intended to be hauled under the ship's bottom to stop the leak, or at any rate to be so far sucked up into the holes, as to block up in some degree the unwelcome apertures. The quarter-deck guns were transferred to the brig; the ship was made a little more snug aloft, and the launch despatched with ten men and a lieutenant to Sierra Leone, to desire the attendance of any man-of-war there, and to urge them to use all possible despatch in coming to our assistance. The powder was safely landed, and we returned to the ship as wet and as tired as rain and labour could make us. Every man in the ship was turned to some use; the servants were taken from the lieutenants and midshipmen, and all on board put their shoulders to the wheel in good earnest.

Our men worked hard, and in silence; but the blacks sung some of their outlandish songs, as they laboured at the pumps and kept the winches at a rapid rotatory movement. This singing soon gave way to fatigue; and from their surly looks and sulky dispositions we argued no very flattering degree of obedience, if they were at all oppressed by labour. Every thing was going on favourably; the different requisite works were progressing towards a termination, and we anticipated some hours' sleep, notwithstanding our misfortune.

At one o'clock in the morning, another black cloud showed its head above the horizon, and soon spread its sable wings over the whole sky. We knew what was coming fast enough: the other bower and sheet anchor were let go, the ropes all properly belayed, for nothing can impede work more than wet ropes eternally dabbling in one's face. The main-top-mast, or rather its wreck, had been struck, and the fishes of the main-mast removed; the quarter-deck guns had been hoisted into the brig, and we had done prodigies in the way of labour. The instant the squall was observed, the brig was cast off, towed some small distance, and well secured, as far as anchor-

could secure her; and we were soon prepared for the coming squall. It came howling and whistling in all the fury of the former hurricane, accompanied by rain, thunder, and lightning; the wind moaned through the rigging, coming from all quarters at once, and heeling the ship, first on one side, then on the other, like boys on a seasaw.

The blacks, who seem rather partial to a squall on shore, began to manifest considerable uneasiness when they heard the unusual roar of strange sounds; and it was with some difficulty and gentle violence that they were made to continue their work. They toiled sullenly and silently, until a flash of lightning struck the ship, and ran along the decks. This fatal flash left three men dead at the pumps: the blacks hid their faces in their hands, and threw themselves on the deck, roaring and howling as dismally as the wind, creating a confusion quite beyond description. A report that the lightning had gone through the ship below occasioned an instant search: the monotonous sound of the water, as it bubbled through the leak forward, was audible enough; but we could not trace any further damage, or discover any other mischief. During this interval the leak gained upon us, for the blacks disregarded all threats of punishment, or all promises of reward: the removal of the dead operated like a charm; it is quite "out of sight, out of mind" in Africa, so the blacks forgot the danger in the removal of their friends, and went to work again. A certain number of our men were kept at work on the sail, and the rest were sent to their hammocks to steal a few hours' sleep, for we had plenty to do, without intermission, for at least a week.

The squall passed over us, and left the same calm and beautiful night which had preceded its coming. Day dawned, and what a sight presented itself! No longer the dashing *Arethusa*, in all the trim neatness of a well-ordered ship! — no longer the tall mast and the squared yard, the tight rope, and the man-of-war's appearance! She was as much altered in one night, as the face of a beauty after an attack of small-pox. A wreck — a pal-

pable wreck ; the crew jaded and fatigued ; the blacks nearly exhausted ; the rigging more like that of a Russian frigate under repair, than the boasted neatness of an English man-of-war ; around us a scene of desolation and destruction, without a prospect of further assistance ; and with an African sun rising, to scorch us into sickness and fever. From the shore, the ship's appearance was by no means flattering. The main-mast was standing ; but here and there were pieces rent by the lightning : the long fish n front of the mast was lying in the booms, with its end on the quarter-deck. It was a sight to humiliate any pride, such as Nelson felt when his fleet was dispersed in a gale. One night had reduced us from the most powerful adversary the French had on that coast, to the level of the most insignificant cruiser.

Alas ! our sufferings were but begun, for hitherto the rain had kept us cool ; but heat and thirst, and sickness and fever were yet to follow up the disaster : there is no calamity like a hot sun and a parched throat when fatigue and indisposition are to be endured. To prognosticate misfortunes was useless ; it was the business of men and officers to remedy what had befallen us. The sail was completed and placed under the bottom, and it afforded no small gratification to find it answered its purpose effectually : it so far relieved the men, that the hand-pumps kept her free, and we got rid of a great part of our black assistants : had they not been on board, the *Arethusa* would have sunk. The ship was set to rights aloft, and soon assumed a creditable appearance ; preparations were made to reimbark the powder and the guns ; and that evening would have seen us a formidable foe. The quarter-deck was scuttled abaft ; and, after using all kinds of ingenious methods, the rudder was forced down in its proper place ; but both pintles and gudgeons being strained, it moved with considerable stiffness. However, there it was, and we could steer by it, without the eternal shivering of the mizen-topsail, or hauling out the driver to keep the ship's head the right way.

It was deemed advisable to have the frigate as light as possible ; for which reason a part of the guns, and most

of the provisions, with stores, &c. were kept on board the brig. The removal of the main-deck guns was proposed; but this met with vigorous opposition, for there was a French frigate on the coast; and not long before our arrival, our predecessor, the *Amelia*, had discovered that it was not every English frigate which could make a sure prize of a French ship of equal force, although she was supposed to be half laden with gold-dust. I do not make this remark to throw the least possible blame upon the *Amelia*; unfortunately, Captain Irby and all his officers were wounded early in the day, and we know how often the loss of rulers damps the ardour of the men, as well as deprives them of the advantage of superior seamanship. I mention it, because it was a caution to us not to be too headstrong, and we were willing to profit by example.

I must now beg leave to introduce myself to my readers no longer as a good curly-headed midshipman, "pride in my look, defiance in my eye," strutting the quarter-deck with the proper official step, repeating the commands of my superior, or hastily answering, "Ay, ay, sir;" — but as a midshipman's boy, — the servant of the mess, the drudge of all drudges. Life is full of strange vicissitudes; and a man who goes down the stream, always escaping the shoals and rocks of misfortune, has only read the title-page of a great work, the leaves of which are as chequered as a chess board. Happiness is quite by comparison; no one knows real happiness who has not met with untoward occurrences. Thank God, I have learnt to be contented!

It became necessary that some one should do the dirty work, and look after the eating department of our mess; our servant was better employed about assisting at other more important work than feeding youngsters. The lot first fell upon the captain's son; who, although a very nice lad, was by no means likely to come into our views with his father within hail; besides, as it was, he was a parlour-boarder, and therefore, in some degree, independent of us. The captain's nephew came next; but he was a weak plant, and not fit to stem the current of adversity, besides, he had been ordered to dine every day in the cabin,

which was a much greater calamity than any we could inflict ; so that we were contented to leave him to his burgoos and his pride, whilst I was installed in all the honours of the situation. I am quite of Lord Byron's opinion, in *Don Juan*, that knowledge is gained by such occurrences, and then

We know what slavery is, and our disasters  
May teach us better to behave when masters :

but true it is, beyond all contradiction, that there is no tyrant like an emancipated slave. The kicks, cuffs, and curses so roughly and so frequently bestowed upon me, have made me cautious, from the experience of my own feelings, of inflicting them upon others. I found, I must confess, that every sentence of Solomon's is not always correct — "A mild answer turneth away wrath," for instance.

My first essay at cooking (for every man can make tea who can boil a kettle, although on this point there is a difference of opinion, for Sir H. Davy put the tea in after the water, in defiance of two hundred years' experience) was a beef-steak pie ; for while we remained near the island, we occasionally stumbled upon an unhappy bullock ; a jumble of pepper and salt junk made the dish palatable enough ; of which I had the strongest evidence, as my masters, I believe I had *ten*, did not leave one morsel for their cook, and seemed disposed to rob me of a small portion of the skin of some pork, with as many bristles thereon as could be found in a scrubbing-brush, and which did not belong to them but to the boatswain. "Water !" was the universal cry ; but we were on short allowance of that ; for, when the ship struck, that was started, and what was left was used sparingly : we had no men for extra work. My next specimen was in the shape of a mouse-pie ; the tails of the little animals were collected like pigeons' feet : I was cuffed for that. No man living could tell the difference between a mouse and a sparrow-pie blind-folded, and the quadrupeds *cur-tailed*. My occupations in the berth were no excuse for not keeping watch : and I can safely aver, that no dog who draws a butcher's barrow had more to do, less to eat, and greater

temptation, than I had. The heat of the sun had one good effect—it almost entirely deprived us of appetite: and we were on short allowance enough. In a week the squadron arrived, consisting of the Meteor, the Tiger, and a schooner: under their escort we weighed anchor, and put to sea, shaping a course for Sierra Leone. A detail of the sufferings of the boat's crew of the launch would make a man's hair stand an end for a fortnight: they returned to us the crew of a Charon boat of spectres, mere ghostly resurrections of bones.

On getting to sea we found the sail answered very well; it had so far sucked into the leaks, that the additional assistance of the chain-pumps, twice a day, kept her free: the ship progressed but slowly, and her wake was as ragged as a splinter. We arrived in safety at Sierra Leone, and came to an anchor off that sink of human wretchedness, misnamed a town. The beautiful fragrance of the limes, on entering the river, with the delightful verdure of the shore, cruelly deceived us as to the painful reality we had such ample time to experience. The wooden huts were distributed in careless irregularity, and the church was not discernible by any outside show: it was a picture of misery, poverty, and meanness; there was no cheering sight, no bustle, no activity; all seemed wretched, naked, and disgusting. Guavas and yams, plantains and limes, could be procured in abundance; but, with the exception of some miserable spruce-beer, pine-apples, and oranges, little else could be procured.

On the right of the town was a wood and a swamp: on the left the low bank of the river is frequently overflowed, and a swamp inevitable; while behind the structures for human habitation was a swamp; day and night mosquitoes buzzed with their ceaseless buzz, excepting when they rested to bite their victim. The alligators appeared the lords of the deep, and floated carelessly, sometimes within a boat-hook's length of the ship, showing their flat heads and scaly backs, which defied a musket-ball; or when annoyed by the noise, merely sunk tail foremost, to rise at a more respectful distance: the sharks disputed the right to swallow the unfortunate fellow who trusted

himself within their element, and added to the comfortable reflection, that starvation and sickness attended us on shore, and death was lurking in the water, if the heated wretch dared to cool himself, or drink by absorption. I have seen many — many places in my life: I have been east and west, north and south, ascended mountains, and dived in mines; but I never knew, nor ever heard mention of so villanous, sickly, and miserable an abode as Sierra Leone. The only harm I wish those who have induced government to father the colony, and be blind to the dirty job is, that they may be condemned to reside there six months even now! — with all the comforts the splendid town may possess, and in full enjoyment of all the sylvan sports and rural shades which nature affords, or art has made.

Our Sunday walks were quite sufficient to make us acquainted with all the luxuries and elegances of this delightful retreat. We were not deficient in amusement: scenes like the following often occurred. A tall black, with nothing in the world on but a cocked-hat, would strut by us; and now and then a sable dandy, with a long-tailed coat, but deficient in every other part of dress, would stand in naked pride for our admiration. The women exhibited in natural nudity all their glowing charms, and some of the younger of these were beautifully formed; but Love never could nestle on the thick black lips of an African nigger. Some gentleman painted the southern wall of his garden black, to retain the heat and ripen his fruit early in the season; perhaps it is the colour and the sun which places a girl of twelve years old at Sierra Leone in so ripe a point of view. Saving their faces, the best resemblance to which is, in their imitative companions of the woods, the monkeys, the *young ladies* of Sierra Leone might rival the finest figures of European manufacture. In purchasing one of these animals, you did not buy a pig in a poke; you saw your bargain as bare as Eve, and consequently could not be taken in like the Chinese, who buys a wife he has never seen, and finds instead of a houri of seventeen, a tigress of forty. The rain fell in torrents, succeeded by a



sun burning one's skin: in short, I know not where the devil walks—but his direction, or *poste restante*, is at Sierra Leone.

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## CHAPTER XII.

It is needless to say one word about the climate of the coast of Africa: we have been taught to regard it as the worst under the sun, and certainly I for one am not going to gainsay it. "Society, friendship, and love," resided not in Sierra Leone; the few commission merchants who were sent out to die, or to turn a dollar, could hardly constitute society. No men are more bitter enemies than rival houses of the mercantile world; and love, with all its soft enchantments, heightened by education and warmed by affection, can hardly be found in an unlettered barbarous naked negress.

In this climate, and surrounded by such people, we had to repair the *Arethusa*. To heave her down was impossible; we had not the requisite materials, neither was there a place eligible for such an undertaking. To attempt to reach the West Indies would have been madness; for although we were sure of a fair wind the whole way, yet we were not secured against a likely accident, such as the sail wearing away, the leak returning in all its force, the rudder failing us, or the main-mast walking over the side. Either of these very probable circumstances would have rendered the attempt extremely hazardous.

On the right of the city of Sierra Leone is a bay called St. George's Bay, and here the rise and fall of water in spring-tides amounts to fourteen or fifteen feet. In this place we determined to run the ship on shore, and, after shoring her up, to see what repairs could be accomplished. We were ignorant of the situation of the greatest leak; the one forward bubbled loudly, so did the one near the main-mast; but as to the extent of either, we were quite in the dark. The toil and the labour of clearing the ship was

partly borne by the crew of the Meteor ; but the fatigue was immense, owing to the burning heat of the sun, in the glare of which, unprotected by any shade, the whole work was to be accomplished. When the ship was cleared of all but a very little ballast, and with only the lower masts and yards standing, we warped her to St. George's Bay, and, at the highest of the tide, ran her on shore, and secured her in an erect position by numerous spars. Two anchors had been laid out astern, in order to heave her off again when the repairs should be finished ; hawsers were run out to some trees, for fear we should float again (a very useless precaution) ; and the ebb of the tide left the *Arethusa* high and dry as far aft as the step of the main-mast. It was a very queer sight to see a large frigate in such a position ; but we had nothing for it but the attempt. When the water was at its lowest, to walk forward from the quarter-deck was some exertion, — it was walking up a steep hill ; and returning was proportionably easy.

The fore-foot of the vessel was entirely gone, and the carpenters set to work to make another : plenty of wood was to be had. We found a very respectable hole in the starboard-bow ; and a black diver, who appeared as much at home as an alligator in the water, and who swore he would face one, scales and all, for two gilt buttons or a cocked-hat, made honourable mention of a very large aperture a little abaft the main-mast. We repaired the two first leaks in the most satisfactory manner : the fore-foot was made on shore by our men, over which we placed a sentinel every night. When the dew of the evening began to fall, we carefully kept our crew on board ; a man, subject to the rays of the moon and the night-damp air, after the burning heat of the day, was almost sure of a fever. The moon, both here and in the West Indies, is more powerful than the sun : meat hung in the rays of the former becomes tainted sooner than if exposed to the latter.

It was strange that, two mornings running, we found the sentinel dead, without the smallest appearance of bodily injury. It then occurred to our rulers that a guard

was perfectly useless ; for the blacks would never think of eating the fore-foot, and they could not extract the iron without making a considerable noise ; and as the article itself lay right under the bowsprit, the sentinel on the fore-castle could watch it as well as the man on shore. Wisely, our crew, notwithstanding the uneasy position of our vessel, were not removed, for the fever had begun to show itself ; and the quiet of the ship tended much to alleviate it.

One day, when the crew were at dinner, a sudden crash was heard, and the ship, then nearly high and dry, gave a sudden heel to port. It required no boatswain's whistle to turn the hands up, for in a moment every man was on deck, anticipating, from the sudden heel, that the ship would fall on her bilge. One shore had more weight than its neighbours, and snapped under its load : it was replaced by another in a shorter period of time than a man, unaccustomed to see what human labour can perform, could credit. When the tide rose, we rectified the difference of weight, and once more had the ship upright. Before the spring-tides returned, all the repairs were finished. Some damages we could not reach, and therefore could not touch. We watched with impatience for the rising of the tide the day previous to the highest flow of water ; and on that evening prepared to launch the ship. We had lashed, at low water, a block to the cable, through which we rove a hawser : the hawser was brought to the capstan, and at nine o'clock at night we commenced operation. In vain we rallied the men ; in vain the lieutenant cried, "Heave together, my lads — one heave more and she's afloat." That heave carried away the hawser, without starting the ship an inch. Fearful that it might unreave, and willing again to try another effort before we gave up the business in despair, we despatched a black diver to find the end. He was down an unusually long time, when one of the crew, who swore he would rather be swallowed by the sharks than remain another month in such a hole, jumped overboard on the same errand as the black.

It so happened that the last man grazed against the first, who, seeing beneath him something white, concluded

it was a shark's white belly ; for, owing to the situation of a shark's mouth, the voracious fish is obliged to turn nearly on its back before it can seize its prey. Up came blackee, trembling like an aspen-leaf spluttering out water and a cry for assistance together : he was instantly handed into the boat. Our man was not a second behind him, having, as he declared, run against an alligator ; and, being perfectly convinced that he had been rescued from destruction by the interposition of divine help, nothing in the world could persuade him to risk his life again, or even to put his feet overboard. Equally fruitless was persuasion on the black man ; he was offered cocked-hats for himself and family, with buttons enough to make his wife a necklace, — all to no purpose ; he declared that he felt the shark's jaw graze against his legs ; and there sat in mute astonishment and fear both shark and alligator, — the one white and damp, the other black, and as dry as a duck, the water running off his oily skin like drops from a sword-blade.

With desponding hearts the crew retired to rest. If we failed the next night, we had another month's horror before us, and then the chances were more against us ; the longer we remained, the more the bed of sand, formed round the ship, would accumulate, and consequently the greater difficulty we should experience in heaving her through it. In vain all hands endeavoured, before they quitted the capstan to make the black understand the truth, and to believe it. The time was gone, the water ebbed, and we were left, as usual, a hulk high and dry at the fall : at low water we spliced the hawser again, and added another purchase. The next night the very first heave launched us, and we floated away to the anchorage with light hearts and cheerful countenances. All hands were eager to leave the cursed hole ; and the knowledge that we were to return to England gave additional energy to the men ; the stores were soon shipped, the guns, powder, and spars on board, the water completed, the ship a-taunto, and the *Arethusa* as warlike and as neat as before the accident. So well had the carpenters repaired the ship, that one hand-pump kept her free the whole

way home. Every preparation being completed, and having buried the second-lieutenant and some few of the sailors, and persuaded some blacks to volunteer for *free* labour, we left that confounded sink of human life, that hell upon earth, and once more found ourselves at sea. Our prize was condemned to us, and left behind to be sold, or ransomed, I forget which. We had as much legal claim to her as England had a few years since to the kingdom of France.

We were departing exactly at the right time, for the tornado season had commenced: we had the benefit of one of these gales every morning at nine o'clock, as regularly as the day came. As the hour advanced, the sky began to lower, then came a small but darker cloud than the rest, to announce the arrival of the wind. We heard it long before it reached us; and there would sometimes be a fresh breeze at the mast-head, while the water was as calm as death. We were always well prepared, as we furled sails directly the clouds began to gather, and, making the ship snug aloft, patiently awaited the wind and the rain. On they came, howling and whistling, creating little whirlwinds, and raising a mist from the waters as thick as a London fog. The sea was white with foam, and the spray blew over the reeling frigate. No seamanship was of any avail; we generally kept up the forestay-sail, leaving the vessel to pay off before the wind, to which position she would no sooner get, than the wind would suddenly shift, and round she would come again. In about a quarter of an hour it would settle into a hard and regular gale; the sea would soon begin to run high; and, in about two hours, the squall, the rain, the gale would have passed, the sea become comparatively tranquil, the hands turned up to make sail, and the *Arethusa* on her way to the Western Islands.

Such is a tornado; the terrific violence of the first unsettled gust is beyond all description; trees are torn up by the roots, houses (if there are any) are unroofed; in short, desolation is in high force, and ruin inevitable. It is an awfully grand moment, in which the veteran is sometimes a coward, and the hardy villain a trembling

suppliant. It is in the fierce tornado, or unrestrained hurricane, in the midst of the roar of the elements, when the thunder rattles over the head, the lightning flashes in the eye, the wind howls, and the rain pours, that man — proud man — may find some humiliation and know his own insignificance ; it is then that the richest is impoverished in a second, without the assistance of a villain, and the poor left houseless and homeless, to wandering vagrancy or hasty starvation. Bear witness, Barbadoes ! — A man who has only seen the squalls of this country, which now and then actually blow down a chimney-pot, or convey the London dust with more than usual rapidity, can form no more idea of the feelings of those who face a hurricane, than a plough-boy can imagine the sea. There are thoughts — thoughts unknown to the bustling of a town — which steal over the mind in solitude, when, left at sunset on some high mountain, the traveller, in the calm evening, views the silent scene around him. I can only describe the feelings in a tornado as exactly the reverse of those : one is a calm view of the greatness and mercy of God ; the other, a fearful hurried knowledge of his power and vengeance ; — one, an idea of tranquil grandeur and eternal content ; the other noisy desolation and immediate death.

I had been relieved from my dignified situation of midshipman's boy, and was every inch an officer again. Well did that convince me, that no man knows the value of happiness who had not been in adversity, any more than a man can duly appreciate the blessings of fortune, who has not felt the rude gripe of poverty and distress. I returned only to make a more desperate leap ; for, being half-starved, and consequently ungenteelly voracious, two other midshipmen and myself placed ourselves by the ladder which leads from the half-deck to the steerage, which is a descent from light to immediate darkness. When the captain's steward was cautiously descending with a dish of unusual tripe in one hand, and salt beef in the other, we took the liberty of dipping our paws into both, and walking off with our seizure to the boatswain's cabin, where we began a rapid mastication. The steward,

on arriving in his berth, discovered the theft, and, as the scent was strong, he soon found the covey. We did not attempt to conceal the business. The steward knew it was impossible for him to frame a sufficient excuse, and therefore mentioned the affair to his master. Good Heavens! the captain's tripe to be pilfered! the savoury morsel, hoarded with care and cooked with niggard measurement of appetites! What! when he had over-calculated the hunger of himself and others — when what was left was an unexpected treasure — could he pardon the violators of the eighth commandment, or forgive the ungentlemanly act of resorting to pilfer, merely to stuff a moment's hunger! Not a bit of it. There was no more generosity in that man's mind than in his pocket: he was as niggard of charitable feelings as he was of tripe; and, instead of compassionating the hunger which prompted gentlemen's sons (if not gentlemen themselves) to have recourse to such a method of obtaining food, we were publicly called on the quarter-deck, disrated, and put before the mast. I was made over to the captain of the main-top to do my duty as a common sailor; one of the others had the foretop for the field of his ambition; and, as I had been placed in the larboard watch, the third became my top-mate, and figured as a pendant in the starbolings. The uniform was placed in the chest, and a round jacket came into play. I was instantly sent to my station; and from that hour to my arrival in the Western Islands, I answered my call with the men, did my duty aloft, learnt to knot, splice, hand-reef, and steer; sing a jolly song, laugh at vindictive malice, hate oppression, compassionate misfortune, and sleep in the royal or top-gallant studding-sail, as quietly and as composedly as the most virtuous lady in the softest of beds.

Sailors have hearts, and feeling hearts too. I soon found my new acquaintances possessing a good proportion of Christian feeling. No one dared insult me; the captain of the top placed the shield of a strong arm over me, and only once was I at all made sensible of my degradation so as to hurt my feelings. It was one night in taking in the royals, which we set flying; I was in the top,

and owing to a want of strength, not of inclination, the sail did not come down so expeditiously as it ought to have done: for this the man aloft had his grog stopped; he vented his spleen upon me in copious abuse, and ultimately struck me. The captain of the top found me in tears, and began to cheer me up. "Never mind, my boy!" said he, "no ship goes a long voyage without a chop of the wind, and you'll veer away to a snug mooring when we get into harbour." I told him what had occurred; he gave one most scientific seaman's curse, jumped at the sailor, knocked him down, and, together with the rest of the topmen, they kicked and thrashed him most unmercifully; and, after that, they contrived that I was never left alone with my enemy.

I was duly reinstated to all my honours on our arrival at the Western Islands, when I was told by my old friends, "that I must clap on my toggery, and ship my quarter-deck face;" which I confess was by no means disagreeable news, or sluggishly performed.

The disrating\*, or punishing a midshipman after the above manner, is quite obliterated in the navy, and very properly. It is hard to hurl a person from his station in life, which birth has given him; and it is a punishment no *one* man has a right to inflict. Dishonourable conduct is punished by society at large; and officially, neglect of duty, or violation of the law, meets its proper penalty; but this penalty ought never to be of that description which is likely to ruin the mind as well as the health of the guilty. We all know how apt boys are to imitate men; now a strict imitation of a sailor's conversation and mode of life would be very amusing perhaps, but very disgusting in good society. Luckily, nature interfered in my behalf; the first piece of tobacco put in my mouth, in humble imitation of a main-top-man's quid, made me sick for a week, and quite cured me of that propensity. My vocabulary was certainly increased; my naval anecdotes em-

\* Since the peace, the following order has been issued: "No captain shall discharge or disrate any mate, or midshipman, or first-class boy, without an order from their lordships, on a home station; or, if the ship be on a foreign station, without the order of the commander-in-chief, who is to report the case and cause of the discharge, or disrating, for their lordships' information."



bellished ; and had I been very anxious of the honour, I might have profited so much as to have become the greatest blackguard in the navy. No longer now can a captain flog a midshipman ; neither can he disrate him without the sanction of the Admiralty, or order of his admiral. Mast-heading is almost worn out : and the watch-and-watch system dies daily. The first-lieutenant must invent some new punishment, for punishment there must be, or the midshipmen will not be worth a straw.

We arrived safe and sound in Plymouth : it blew a hard gale when we anchored, and the plea of that and the leak was sufficient to warrant our anchorage in that port. Ships from foreign stations always were ordered to Portsmouth, and Plymouth was reserved for the Channel fleet. I wrote a hasty despatch, requesting to be removed from my dashing frigate ; and by return of post an order arrived for my removal into the *Menelaus*, then under the command of Peter Parker. It was a custom of the Venetians to write down an injury received, and there to retain it until it was revenged and cancelled. In my mind I have religiously treasured up the injury done to my feelings by that tyrannical injustice in being disrated. Now, with the publicity of the event, and this means of revenge, I erase it from my memory, and write down with Loredano, — “ *L’ha pagata,* ” —

A long and just one — Nature’s debt and *mine*.

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VOLUME THE SECOND.

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## CHAPTER XIII

LORD BYRON somewhere says, for I cannot find it just now, that we feel a remorse at leaving even the most unpleasant people, after having been habituated to their society. Some of the Proverbs even of Solomon admit of doubt occasionally, and therefore the law of Byron may be sometimes questionable: for instance, when I left the *Arethusa*, with my chest and hammock in the stern-sheets of a shore-boat, I so soon got rid of the fond feelings of regret at parting, that, before the boat was well clear of the counter, I gave three cheers, and from that moment to this never cast eyes upon her more.

The *Menelaus* was in the Sound: she was one of the finest frigates in the navy; and those who remember poor Peter Parker, remember also his worth, and how qualified he was to be the captain of so fine a ship. Everything here differed from the frigate I had just left; the yards of the ship were painted white instead of black; the men wore white hats, so did the officers; the gaskets for the sails were covered with bleached canvass; the mast-heads were white, and, as for blocks, one might as well have looked for a poodle dog aloft as for one of these unsightly facilitators of work. All the dingy colours of the *Arethusa* quarter-deck, "dock-yard yellow, made more doubtful from a flash of blue," were exchanged for green-painted bulwarks, decks as white as snow, officers in their proper uniforms — not hobbling about in short jackets like the mate of a merchantman, but dressed like officers, and walking as such. The peculiar strut of the officer of the watch did not escape the notice of the author of *Childe Harold*, who makes honourable mention of it; indeed any man with eyes in his head would remark the consequential air with which the lieutenant paces the deck, with his glass

under his arm, and with his eyes constantly employed in watching the sails and the compass, the weather and the horizon.

We were ordered to the Mediterranean; and Lord William Bentinck, who was appointed to the command in Sicily, took his passage in the frigate. To this nobleman I was indebted for my removal from the African cruiser, and feel a grateful twitch of memory, even at this length of time, for the change of situation he occasioned.

Captain Parker was then about twenty-three years of age, — tall, handsome, and well-proportioned; one of the finest-looking men I ever remember to have seen — brave as he was handsome, and, like the brave, always generous. He received me kindly, as I was introduced to him by his lordship; and I dived down to the larboard berth, and joined as gallant a crew of youngsters as ever belonged to any ship in his majesty's service. If on deck, we were obliged to be scrupulously correct; for Peter used to say, if ever he had occasion to find fault with a sailor for being deficient in respect to a midshipman, "By the god of war (his favourite oath) I will make you touch your hat to a midshipman's coat, if it's hung on a broomstick to dry:" we were not quite so nice below; and we enjoyed all the luxury of a republican mess. I am free here to admit, that if republican governments are no better than republican messes — where the strongest are fed, and the weakest starve — I should prefer a despotism in the shape of a king or a caterer. Midshipmen's berths are often the faithful representations of larger societies; sometimes an overgrown bully becomes the sovereign disposer of the good things: his word is a law, and when he feels inclined to alter his resolutions, or his previous regulations, he, in imitation of the great northern overgrown bear, issues an order instead of an ukase, and all the previous codes become a dead letter, and are pitched under the table, the last being the rule by which the empire and the mess are to be governed. Then it is, that the people and the midshipmen feel the capricious despotism, and, uniting in one firm body, turn the one to the right-about, and institute a republic, as we did in our mess; or place

up another puppet, to be removed at discretion, as happened with the poor shoemaker made dey of Algiers ; or, a king to be the slave of his people, who no longer acknowledge even the name of subjects, and make the monarch bow to the mob, as the Parisians did — that curious anomaly, “the citizen king,” — without *subjects*, and with a *sovereign people*, — Louis-Philippe, of glorious memory, king of the French, and subject of the mob. I hate politics, as I hate a mob government.

We sailed a few days afterwards ; the ship a very paragon of good discipline ; for her former first-lieutenant, now Captain Plumridge (a name well-known and properly appreciated in the navy), had left her in as high order as ever Mainwaring, his successor, could have wished. She was reduced to a mere piece of mechanism ; the watch was made, and we had only to wind it up. She really did

Walk the waters like a thing of life,  
And seem'd to dare the elements to strife.

Any man might justly have been proud of such a command ; and any Englishman might have felt a glowing satisfaction, that, generally speaking, “of such was the British navy.”

Our crew were good, and mostly able seamen ; and when they were mustered at divisions in their clean white frocks and trowsers, towing a line along the deck, they looked what they were (not like some soldiers made up of pads and pipe-clay), a hardy, well-disciplined, clean, and gallant crew. The different evolutions were performed almost in silence, and with wonderful celerity ; no harlequin at Covent Garden could make a greater change more apparently instantaneously than Peter could make, and shorten sail. We felt that conscious security, arising from well-placed confidence, so very desirable on board a ship, — we felt we had little to fear from an adversary of our own size, and that we could baffle a superior force, or the elements, by the promptitude and skill by which the ship was manœuvred or conducted. Captain Parker's method ought to be held up for universal imitation ; the whole style of his ship was what a British man-of-war

should always be: his table was elegant, and the dignity of the inferior officers was upheld by the constant invitations of the captain. I have always remarked, that when a captain, owing to his wife and large family, his overdrawn agent, and his slender supplies, is obliged to live upon the ship's allowance, and is too poor to see his officers occasionally, that his ship is invariably in bad order; the men and the officers both lose some of the respect due to him; and if that is once shaken, no power — no strut — no cat — no black list can restore it. It is the distant respect to the captain, and his constant wish for their society, that places both officers and captain in their proper position in the eyes of the ship's company. There is a distance at table, it is true; but when a gentleman is the captain, that distance is not cold or over-formal, but of that kind which is experienced by a new acquaintance. Every captain should remember this, *my* opinion: — "No man can be respected, who is coarse and familiar one moment, and distant and reserved the next." — Perhaps some of my readers might have accidentally in early life copied the proverb, "Familiarity breeds contempt." Therefore it will be found that a captain is more beloved, feared, and respected, when he keeps himself properly aloof from too familiar intercourse with his officers; and they do their duty with more activity and vigilance when they know that the slightest dereliction of duty will subject them to public reproof, and consequent disgrace.

Having landed Lord William and his suite at Palermo, we repaired to Toulon, off which Sir Edward Pellew (late Lord Exmouth) was cruising with the whole fleet. It was a glorious sight to see our ships standing close to the enemy's harbour, and manœuvring within gun-shot of a closely blockaded and superior fleet: there the hostile tricoloured flag was displayed from fort and vessel; but ours swept the sea, and floated from the peaks of twenty-four sail of the line, some frigates, and smaller vessels, almost within hail of the enemy. "The British Leopards" (as Bonaparte spitefully called us) were chased into the sea; but we were sovereigns on that sea, and dared to

beard the French eagle even in its cage—if eagles can be bearded.

Captain Parker, who envied Blackwood's good luck, which enabled him to bring the two fleets together at Trafalgar, always muttered, "I'll do it yet, if they will only give me one chance;" and perhaps I may mention one or two desperate attempts of my captain to add additional laurels to our naval history.

Sir Edward had cruised long enough to practise his fleet, and, as the winter was fast approaching, the signal was made—"In case of parting company, rendezvous at Port Mahon." The Curaçoa, then under the command of Captain Tower; the Havannah, under Captain Hamilton, and the Menelaus, were left as the blockading squadron; and however much all captains like to see an admiral steering a different course to themselves, yet, on this occasion, the lonely appearance of the three frigates; the knowledge that for three months we were, as the sailors called it, "To polish Cape Secie;" and the full sail of the fleet, for a close harbour, made us watch the last flutter of the admiral's flag with no small *régret*, as it lessened in the distance.

The blockading squadron had by no means a very enviable situation,—constantly exposed to the winter gales, daily and nightly obliged to keep a most vigilant look-out, always within ten or twelve miles of a superior enemy, without much chance of either prize-money or fresh provisions, and being very shortly *out* of all patience and potatoes. The usual business of standing out at sun-set, and standing in every morning, watching the commodore and the French harbour, soon sickened us of the station—in fact, we were sea-sick. To relieve this irksome sameness, the Havannah was despatched off Marseilles for a week; and, on her return, we were gratified to find her absence had not been in vain: she had made one good capture, and sent her in. We both shared, by agreement; and, consequently, the news was well received and eagerly communicated.

It was now our turn, and we directed our course towards Corsica. The next morning thirty small vessels

were seen running along shore, and immediately the *Mene-la-us* was under all sail in chase. On our nearing the shore the poor devils of Frenchmen began to huddle their crafts together, like birds on the approach of a hawk ; consequently they impeded their progress, as one vessel took the wind out of the sails of her nearest ally ; not to mention running foul of each other every two minutes. Our first shot, which struck the water close to the outside vessel, was the signal for a general "stand" of the small fry. The wind was fresh, and the sea running pretty high ; so that only one of the vessels became a prize, the rest being destroyed by shot, the shore, and the sea. In the evening, owing to some clumsiness of the officer of the watch, who gave the frigate sternway when he hove-to, the prize, in passing within hail, struck against the counter, and foundered immediately. The crew were all saved ; but we had nothing left for our morning's trouble.

This was a good, and yet a bad, beginning ; we had broken the ice, but had reaped no benefit from it. However, we were not long in "making amends for past mis-carriage." A brig, apparently a man-of-war, was discovered running along shore towards Toulon. When she saw us between her and her port, she anchored under a small battery. The wind was too fresh for her to beat to windward, and the trial would have been certainly fatal for the brig ; for, independently of our advantage of sailing, a bobbing head-sea, which sends a brig up and down like boys on a sec-saw, does not so much affect a longer and a heavier vessel. About sunset we were within gun-shot of the chase, and made an instant attempt to convert her into our property, by standing in with the frigate ; but the water soon became too shallow, and we hove-to. In the mean time neither the crew nor the garrison went to sleep ; the greatest possible activity was discernible, and they seemed to be securing the brig with as many hawsers as would have warped a fleet up Hamoaze. When the sun set the wind died away, and left us in a nice calm sea to commence offensive operations. The boats were hoisted out and armed, the officers and men *appointed*, for all hands volunteered ; and I was for the first time in my

life to see a "cut-out," — a service, with the exception of a "forlorn hope," unrivalled. The enemy we knew to be well prepared ; and, from the occasional groups seen walking towards the battery, we knew they anticipated our attack, and were well prepared to receive us.

In the midshipmen's berth all was activity and energy ; every one was eager apparently to share the danger ; and those who were not destined to go took special good care to appear annoyed, and to manifest a disregard of all danger likely to be experienced. For my own part, I am free to admit that I felt a creeping chill through all my veins. No man faces a service like the present without some little apprehension ; and the person who avers that such feelings belong not to him, would find very little credit with any one who lived and served through the last war. Two chances arise ; the one, of being numbered with the killed and wounded in the Gazette ; the other, of being so far rewarded for one's valour, as to have on every future opportunity the preference of being shot first, or selected to risk life in some trivial attack. For a time I hesitated to accept of the proposition of young Martin, which was to stow ourselves away under the head-sheets of the pinnace, and not to appear until the boats had left the ship. Seeing him resolved to share the enterprise, my courage was excited ; and, stealing out of one of the main-deck ports, we slipped unperceived into the boat, placing ourselves under the care of the bowmen, and in concealment awaited the order to shove off with boyish impatience. When we were some distance from the ship, and with muffled oars and careful pull were stealing towards the enemy, Martin and myself came from our stow-hole, and took up our situations in the stern of the boat. We were both called fools for our pains, and I am by no means certain we did not merit the appellation ; for, in the navy, a man has ample opportunities of being killed, without wantonly courting the danger.

We soon neared the brig, undiscovered until pretty close, when a discharge of round-shot, grape, and canister, with the usual accompaniments in the minor key of muskets and pistols, convinced us the time was arrived for



“three cheers, and then hurrah ! for the first on board.” We did give three cheers, and three good hearty cheers they were ; then splash went the oar, the silence of the still night being broken by the war-cry of the one, and the firing of the other party. We boarded her on the off-quarter ; for she was broadside on to the battery : the resistance was trifling, in comparison to the eagerness of the assault ; and in two minutes the last Frenchman, who fought like a tiger, and who clung to his charge, like the mate of the deck to the grog-tub, was assisted in his retreat by the cockswain of the barge, who, d——g him for an obstinate brute, seized him in his arms and bundled him overboard. The hawsers were cut ; but the brig was immoveable : at first it was conjectured she was aground, but we soon discovered it was a chain to the battery which held her fast ; and had the lubberly Frenchmen hooked her, instead of lashing her, to the chain, she might have been there now, or burnt instead of captured. The seizings of the chain being cut, we had the satisfaction of seeing our prize afloat, and, shortly afterwards, under sail.

While we were close to the battery, every shot went over us, and we had only one man wounded from the musketry ; but directly we began to draw off the shore, assisted by a light wind, hardly a shot missed us. Every man was sent down below, except the helmsman, who was the lieutenant who commanded the boats ; and thus, in comparative security, we arrived with our prize, boats, and men, all safe, and only four of the last wounded, alongside the frigate. There can be no doubt that “the full of hope, misnamed forlorn,” on shore, have fearful odds to contend against ; that the chance of surviving is small indeed, with a certainty of being wounded. With the exception of this service, there is none so eminently dangerous as “cutting out ;” one chance shot may cut the boat in half ; and who is to swim with as many muskets, swords, and pistols lashed to him, as Robinson Crusoe used in his peregrinations against wild beasts and in search of food ? The oars may be destroyed, and then, like *vin ordinaire*, you are taken, or swallowed, at discretion ; and now that steam is in vogue, woe betide the

jolly tars who face the smoke-jacks ! Alas ! we have only the remembrance of what has been done : never again shall we be able to blockade a fleet with three frigates ; the first moderate breeze or calm day, and the whole squadron would be captured. In short, whenever it does please our precious ministry to favour us with another war, the whole service must be altered ; smoke must supply the place of *sweeps*, and steam be used instead of shots.

As in the above description our “cut out” had little to do with the shore, I will relate another affair, which will show how amphibious a ship’s crew may be, and that we were not only pretty fierce antagonists on board, but that, on emergencies, we could march and countermarch on shore, to the no small mortification of our foes.

We were cruising off the coast of Italy, and had been very unsuccessful in the way of captures ; our martial ardour, or empty pockets, had called into existence the desire of glory or gain. No doubt glory is a very fine thing, but honour will not mend a broken leg ; whereas gain will pay the apothecary’s bill. I merely mention this, because we hear a great deal about honour and glory, and such like, and no one is candid enough to say that lucre — vile, filthy lucre, has any thing to do with the business ; but we “sea attorneys” know better. I have known the prize-money shared in imagination, previously to the capture, and honour and glory never mentioned in the calculation. In Porto Ercole (the name may indicate its strength) we saw a brig and a few merchant-ships at anchor : the brig was painted with black sides and red port-holes, eight of a side, riding in the centre of the harbour, and to all appearance ready for sea. This was quite enough for Sir Peter Parker ; he resolved to have her ; and as the case was desperate, he determined to take the command of the boats himself — a very foolish and a very unjust thing to do, inasmuch as no superiority of rank can be gained by the captain, and first-lieutenants of frigates are generally old enough for grandfathers, and have no chance of promotion from parliamentary interest, or they would not

have been first-lieutenants ; their only hope is in an affray of this kind, — a well-written despatch, and a warm recommendation : besides, it is hard to be deprived of the equal chance of being either killed or promoted.

On the right of the harbour is a strong battery, which commands the anchorage, and on the left a regular citadel overlooks the roadstead and protects the town : the small vessels in these close harbours always lie alongside the pier, and very much screen the town from general view. We were as ignorant as unborn babes of the force of the garrison ; our eyes were directed to the brig, and not to the battery. We were not quite such fools as to make an attempt the night of the discovery ; therefore, as if we had seen enough to convince us of the security of the port, we tacked and stood out to sea. The next day was a busy day on board ; the marines were under arms, and marched and countermarched about the decks, formed into hollow squares, and charged about the ship, to the no small danger and annoyance of the quiet twisters of rope-yarns ; the small-arm men fired at a target, which they did not much injure ; the boats were put in order and readiness ; swords were polished, pistols prepared, and boarding-pikes examined.

Towards evening we stood in, and made the land just at dusk. At ten o'clock we were off the harbour's mouth, the boats out, manned, and armed, Sir Peter in his gig, in command of the whole ; while the marines were destined for separate service, under as brave a soldier as ever marched to victory, Lientenant Banyan. I was ordered this time, having gone without being ordered before, to land the marines on a low point on the right-hand entrance of the harbour, and to keep in readiness to re-embark them at a moment's warning. The enemy were fairly off their guard ; never dreaming we were near the harbour ; and thus we landed unobserved, sheltering the boats under some hanging trees, which most conveniently grew for our concealment. The marines, thirty in number, were silently formed, and marched off ; and, as I thought the cockswain would take care of the boat quite as well as I could, I took the liberty of

leaving my post (for which the administration of the cat would have been a proper reward), and marched away with our land army. We were desired to seize the fort, then throw up a rocket; upon which signal Sir Peter Parker and the division of boats under his command were to capture the brig, while the marines turned the guns of the battery against the town and the citadel.

We had not advanced two hundred paces when one of our small party declared he heard the tramp of horses: the word "cavalry" gave a sudden panic, and immediately those in the rear turned round and betook themselves to flight. The second-lieutenant of marines, a gentleman who tied a wet towel round his head of a night to make his hair curl, and whose courage was proof against his hair standing on end, declared he would run the next man through the body who attempted to retreat; and one unfortunate fellow, who considered the chance of the lieutenant's sword preferable to the hostile sabres of the cavalry, was run through the arm, as he attempted to pass his officer. This stopped the rest; order was restored, and we continued our march with only fifteen men, one half having retreated without orders. Banyan never heeded the loss of his coward gang the least, but whispered his confidence to the remainder, and marched by their side. Suddenly the alarmed sentinel of the battery gave the challenge — "*Qui va là?*" which was answered by a marine of the name of Abraham Hooper, who called out, "Oh! d—n your lingo; show us the battery." No electric spark ever ran quicker along a conductor, than these words did through our *army*. The sentinel fired his musket, the fort was instantly alarmed, and we found ourselves directly over it. Banyan called out "Charge!" and down the slope we ran, bundled somehow into the battery, and long before the officer could put on his coat, for he was in bed, we were in possession. One of the marines, whose duty was to spike the guns which did not look towards the town, was actually on one of the guns before the Frenchmen had left it. The rocket was thrown up, and answered by three cheers; the town and citadel were instantly in com-

motion, and guns and voices startled the drowsy from their beds.

The brig was captured before the crew had the smallest idea of their danger, and the cheers from her were answered by us on shore. Our launch, with a twenty-four pounder, had been judiciously placed in such a direction as to draw the fire of the citadel from the brig, and thus leave the captors at liberty to get her under weigh partially unmolested. Sir Peter jumped along the jib-boom to loosen the sail, when a shot cut the foot-rope away, and the captain would have been overboard had he not been a sailor, every finger of whose hands aloft becomes a fish-hook. Some fool called out — “There, the captain’s killed!” but he soon set that to rights, by answering, “that he was worth two dead men as yet, and was untouched.” When we saw the brig under sail, we spiked the rest of the guns, threw them and their carriages over the parapets, did as much mischief as time would allow, made good our retreat, embarked, and went to assist in towing the brig. In the mean time, the cutter had attempted the capture of another vessel, which looked invitingly large, and was moored alongside the jetty; but a division of French troops soon foiled the attack, and left one or two men dead in our boats.

The brig was now ours, and out of the harbour, when a round shot struck the starboard oars of the pinnace, about a foot outside of the rowlocks, and carried away six of them; this for a while retarded the tow; but the launch and cutter coming to our assistance, we soon had the prize in security. The last round of grape which was fired was near-hand robbing us of our captain; one of the shot entered the gig in which he had just placed himself and was picked up between his feet. The *St. Joseph* had soon an English crew on board, and that night made sail for Malta. This was a gallant business; it was hastily planned, and daringly executed; and our loss trivial when opposed to the number of our enemies, their situation, and constant vigilance. The security of the harbour was so well known to our fleet, that the admiral and many of the officers imagined we had mistaken the port, as two of our

frigates had been very severely handled in a similar affair a month previous to our attack.

Those were the good old days of honour and glory : if a beardless boy did command a ship, he had often his chance of death, and not like some of the peace-bred officers who never heard the whiz of a shot, or the whistle of a musket-ball in their lives ; but who have been placed at the college by the first lord, promoted on the expiration of their time, and who know about as much of naval tactics as a dog does of the manual exercise. It cannot be denied that many very valuable lives were lost during the war, in the species of annoyance to our enemies above mentioned ; and in many cases it is much to be regretted that the preservation of life did not predominate over the desire of riches. On one occasion we cut out, near Terracina, a poor miserable settee, evidently without a cargo, the whole value of which did not amount to 600 dollars ; in the performance of the duty we lost three men, besides having four wounded. The annoyance caused to the enemy is not proportionate to the loss experienced ; and when there is a probability of that being the case, the desperate service ought never to be resorted to. The most gallant action of this kind on record, is where Sir Edward Hamilton, with merely the boats of one frigate, cut out a larger frigate from one of the closest harbours in the world (Puerto Cabello), or Hair Harbour, so called from the natural security of the port, implying that a hair would hold the ship. Every ship during the war was more or less engaged in these offensive operations, which contributed so much to promotion and emulation. Now this is all over—steam ! steam !—stand clear of the paddle-box—we shall see a most glorious change next war ; and whether beneficial or not to the English navy, time alone will prove ; certain it is, that every fleet must have two or three soot-barges in attendance. And no one will dispute that, although our naval experience may not be half so valuable as it hitherto has been, yet that, upon the whole fewer lives will be lost, and many benefits will arise from the introduction of the smoke-jacks.

## CHAPTER XIV.

No man could exist six months, blockading an enemy's fleet, without fresh provisions, or a change of scene. As we were not very often blessed with the former, we seized every opportunity of courting the latter; and thus we often found ourselves in desperate scrapes, from which nothing but most desperate courage could have extricated us.

We were for a few days left to blockade the French fleet; a circumstance alone sufficient to have kept us quiet, and which ought to have been our safeguard against any wanton attacks on the enemy; for had we been captured, the enemy's fleet might have put to sea, and sailed round the world before they could have been tracked. It was a fine morning, with a freshening breeze from the eastward, when we espied a frigate and a store-ship running down by the "Little Pass," endeavouring to get into Toulon. We immediately made sail to windward with the intention of cutting them off, if possible, or at any rate honouring them with a salute, Turkish fashion—with the guns shotted. No sooner did the enemy's frigate descrie us in full sail on a wind, than she hauled up on the larboard tack under easy sail, standing with her head off shore. Our plan was made known by signal to the French fleet; and shortly afterwards we had the mortification of seeing thirteen sail of the line standing out of the harbour, while a division consisting of two line-of-battle ships and three frigates formed the in-shore squadron, and remained under easy sail to windward of the harbour.

When the frigate perceived her friends well clear of the port, she bore up under her topsails, keeping as close as prudence would allow to the shore. We now edged away a point, and, running at the rate of nine knots, were soon within gun-shot of our opponent. The hostile flags were both displayed, and a very pretty forenoon's entertainment seemed about to commence. The batteries on shore began the engagement, we being about point-blank distance. The first shot went through the fore-topmast, about three

feet above the cap, cutting it nearly in half. The foretop-gallant sail was instantly handed ; the jib hauled down, and the fore-topsail lowered ; capstan-bars were handed aloft for fishes, and men set to work to remedy the misfortune. The enemy's frigate gave three very good cheers, and followed up the noise by a broadside, which, far from being well directed, was only a loss of powder and shot. We were now within pistol-shot, which looks, at sea, like Bob Acres fighting in a sentry-box, a great deal too close to be pleasant ; when we bore round up, commenced the action on our side, and very shortly saw our opponent's main-topsail come down by the run, and his peak, ensign and all, swinging about like a broken arm. We were within hail, and hammering away in the most Christian-like manner, when the master reported that the French fleet had tacked, and that the van ship looked to windward of us.

A prudent man would have instantly desisted from further offensive operations, and only thought of a speedy retreat : not so Sir Peter Parker : he was resolved to have a continuation of the tragedy, and interrupted the cautious suggestions of old Soundings, with, " Another broadside, my lads : be steady, and take good aim. That's all right—let the smoke clear away."—" We must really wear, sir," said the master ; " for, independent of being in shoal water, we never can pass to windward of the enemy's line ; and we cannot run between them and the shore, for that in-shore squadron."—" One more broadside, and then stand by to board," was the only answer. Sir Peter's guardian angel interposed, and took the film of glory from his eyes, showing him his inevitable ruin in the perseverance of his plan. We wore and stood out to sea ; the French frigate again cheering, the batteries firing, and we for the moment quieted. To hug the wind, and give the enemy a windward chase, was impossible ; we could neither carry jib nor fore-topsail ; the breeze was freshening fast, and the fishes in the shape of capstan bars were not sufficiently strong to support the mast : our damages otherwise were trifling, being mostly confined to the running rigging, which was shortly spliced and re-rove, and one or



two holes in the sails. We had nothing left for it but to steer boldly for the van ship of the enemy's line, say our prayers, and pack up for a French prison. As for *hope*, we had none. A single frigate to face thirteen sail of the line, amongst which were three three-deckers, besides an in-shore squadron, all ready to pick up the wounded bird, if it should happen to fly past the line of fire, was something like pigeon-shooting, where, if the pigeon is missed by the man in, about a thousand stragglers take the liberty of knocking it down.

I was quartered at the eight after-guns on the main-deck, and therefore I had the *entrée* of the captain's cabin, or rather the privilege of walking where the cabin did exist. My attention was awakened by the presence of the captain; for I had been looking out of the stern-windows at our late antagonist, who, while he directed his course into Toulon, continued to direct his broadside at us. Sir Peter called his clerk, destroyed his private letters; placed the signals in the leaded box, ready to be thrown overboard: looked round the quarters quite unconcerned; and, having cast his eyes over some private memoranda, walked on deck as leisurely as if he had a prospect of saving the frigate. Very differently did we behave. My companion at quarters had been a prisoner in Verdun, and began to recall to his memory all the privations and fatigues he had undergone. "Put on your thickest shoes, my lad," said he to me; "two pair of stockings, and an extra shirt: make your mind up to stretch your legs, for you'll be tied to a horse's tail, all in a line like a file of soldiers; and, trot or gallop, you must trot and gallop too; no chance of an escape; *gendarmérie* before, behind, right and left—no pity for youngsters. Stop when the horses stop. As for money, that would be serviceable, if they would let you keep it; but money is a golden key too likely to fit any lock: besides, plunder is proverbial in the French navy."

The crew, who overheard these pleasant intimations, caught the alarm, and ventured to exchange ideas in the following tone: "No more Common-Hard or North-Corner hops for my Poll and me. Caught upon a clinch

here, and no knife to cut the seizings. I say, Tom, can you palley-vous ? for these outlandish lubbers can't speak our lingo. My eyes and limbs, if I would not sooner see the barkey sink under us, than see that striped rag over our jack. It must blow great guns and muskets to blow us clear of these mounseers this time ! ”

The private signals were placed on the capstan, and Sir Peter took up his position on the carronade slide on the larboard side, abreast of the wheel. The men all stood to their quarters, and the minute rapidly approached which was to decide our fate. We were within about two miles of our adversaries when the leading ship tacked and shortened sail. This was followed by the whole fleet, which tacked in succession, and brought their rear ship as our nearest opponent. As we were obliged to steer about a point and a half from the wind, the French line looked to windward of us, and we were sailing upon that angle which would have brought us exactly in contact with the centre ship. We were about a mile distant from the sternmost ship, when the French fleet edged away, and steered on a parallel with us. To have borne up would have been madness, because the whole line would have been outside of us, and might have run us either on shore or on board, as they thought best. Our enemies being under their topsails and jib, progressed about five knots through the water, while the *Menelaus*, being under all sail she could bear, was advancing at the rate of nine.

We were now a long pistol-shot distant, and abreast of the enemy's rear ship. Calmly did we stand the broadside of her—to return it was useless ; besides, firing puts down the wind, and the harder it blew the better for us. We passed ship after ship, each firing as we came abreast, and each ceasing when her second ahead commenced. Had they made more sail, and luffed to the wind, nothing in the world could have saved us—the capture was inevitable. At last we came alongside of the headmost ship. Hope now began to dawn ; provided our masts were preserved we had a chance of escape. Not a word was heard on board the *Menelaus* as the broadside of this eighty-gun ship whistled over our heads. The master himself was

steering the ship with the steadiness of a fearless sailor, determined not to lose an inch of ground, and we had passed the beam of the enemy before he relinquished the helm to the quarter-master.

At this moment the enemy ceased firing, and the whole fleet began to make all sail in chase. It seemed as if they had just awakened to a reality scarcely conceivable—that their enemies were slipping through their fingers, merely from want of common energy in closing their hands. We edged away about a point, in order to get right ahead of our antagonist; which having effected, we began to fire our stern-chasers, in hopes of wounding a spar of the eighty-gun ship. As however the weight aft did not assist our speed, but had evidently altered the trim for the worse, the guns were removed to their proper stations; the men were directed to lie down at their quarters; and very shortly we, thanks to the long legs of the frigate, were a mile and more a-head of our enemies.

As nothing but the greatest good fortune had kept the fore-top-mast standing, which now began to complain in consequence of the increased force of the wind, we edged away about two points more; and the *soi-disant* sailors of France, instead of bearing up and cutting us off at an angle, or nearing us again, which they must have done by this simple evolution, kept on the same course until in our wake, and then edged away in chase. By following this plan, we shortly were sailing right before the wind, and began immediately to shift the fore-top-mast, keeping all our studding-sails upon the main-mast. This was our worst point of sailing, and it was evident that the two leading ships of the enemy's line closed us a little. We were by no means out of the scrape, and all our activity was required to get ready for making more sail. It was magic to our enemies. We had another fore-top-mast, and all a-taunt forward with the sails set, in an incredibly short time; on seeing which the French fleet hauled to the wind on the larboard tack, then tacked and stood towards Toulon.

One would have supposed that Sir Peter Parker had had enough of battles and of blows for one day; but no!

the hands were turned up, "reef topsails." Two reefs taken in, and we in chase. We soon got a very nice situation on the lee quarter of the sternmost ship, and hammered away at her until we had made some few holes in her sails and hull. Suddenly, however, the French fleet bore up; and we, like good boys, did the same. Had they followed us then, they would have caught us; but we never could entice the fleet to leeward of the port, for it blew fresh, and looked like an approaching gale; in which case an accident might have brought our fleet out before the French could have reached their port. Gales sometimes blow for three weeks off Toulon.

The English newspapers gave a detailed account of what never occurred; mentioning that the *Menelaus* had been dismasted by two French line-of-battle ships, and had been rescued and towed into Minorca by two ships of Sir Benjamin Hallowell's division; and that the killed and wounded amounted to half the ship's company in number.

Strange as it may appear, not one shot of the French line hulled us. We had a hole or two aloft; but we were in as ready a state for any evolution (saving the fore-topmast) when we bore up, as we were when we first stood in to attack the frigate and store-ship. With what sincere pleasure did I hear the retreat beat after the guns were secured, the enemy in harbour, and we left again the only desolate ship on the station! It was an escape amounting to a miracle.

These little brushes kept the cobwebs of discontent from being spun upon our minds; and, with these exceptions, our lives were passed in horrid monotony. At sunrise the usual careful look-out, to see no ships were outside of us, and the coast clear; the same muster at nine o'clock, to see the arms clean as well as the men; the tack in-shore and out again; dinner, quarters, pipe the hammocks down, and turn in; perhaps at eight o'clock a fiddle and a dance—a *bull* dance. Now and then a group of sailors in the fore-castle twisted the long yarn of an improbable adventure, of which kind the author of *Sailors and Saints* has given some splendid interesting examples; or broke the silence of the night by one of the many songs which have

so much contributed to keep alive the courage and the fancy of the seamen ; and to instil into the minds of others an ardent wish to be serviceable to their country, on their country's element—the sea.

How much, how very much is the nation indebted to Dibdin ! His songs are made for sailors, and breathe the very inspirations they require. It is true, in many of the nautical phrases he has erred ; but Jack sets all that to rights, without much regard to harmony of versification or elegance of diction.

Of all bipeds the sailor is the most extraordinary. His, although an ever-changing life, is seldom altered. He changes the climate and the station, but his home is the ship ; the discipline always the same ; and the land, which is greeted with such raptures by a voyager from a distant country, offers no recreation or gratification beyond some fresh meat and vegetables. His work, his time, is for ever required on board ; and, during the war, such was the fear of desertion, that few captains allowed their men the liberty to be absent for twenty-four hours, excepting in places like Minorca, which offered few opportunities for escaping. But the sailor is, or looks to be, always happy and contented ; and to see the rough tars dancing with one another to the miserable scrape of a fiddle, or the more inharmonious music of the fife and drum, one could scarcely credit but a ship was the abode of happiness and contentment ; that the sailor knew no other joy but that of a dance or a song ; and that his heart, however much it might have been pledged to his darling inconstant girl at the back of the Point at Portsmouth, was, in reality, on board the ship, devoted to his duty, his king, and his country. That the denial of recreation has unfortunately occasioned the loss of many very valuable seamen, cannot be doubted ; and I have ever found it the case, that the captain most liberal of leave to his ship's company was always most likely to retain the really good man. Now that a part of the pay is given to the sailor when abroad, there ought to be some order to force the captains to grant the necessary recreation, which would save very lamentable exhibitions in the shape of punishments, arising either

from endeavours to desert, or from crimes ruinous to health and morality, and contrary to all laws human and divine.

The relation of battles is seldom very agreeable, principally because it is impossible clearly to comprehend them. The panorama of the battle of Waterloo would have done just as well for the battle of Austerlitz ; and I never look at a plate of Trafalgar without thinking that it would do for any other naval action — that is, in the eye of a landman. I must however indulge *myself*, at least by the account of a skirmish on shore, in which some of those touching scenes occurred, over which the mind delights to wander, and Memory confers a favour when she recalls them into existence.

We were about ten miles to the eastward of Marseilles, when we saw a vessel at anchor in a narrow bay. Prize-money to a sailor is like blood to a blood-hound ; once tasted, never relinquished, unless indeed a superior force interfere. To see this little vessel, small as she was, and to know that a certain sum, however insignificant, would result from her capture, were sufficient excitements. Sir Peter Parker, who closely watched the position of this miserable settee, and who had satisfied himself of her very defenceless situation, manned the boats, and desired one of the lieutenants to bring out the prize, for so we named her, long before we had her. On this expedition we had only three boats employed ; for, as we could not distinguish the slightest fortification, or any thing like a battery, or numerous men assembled, the small force was deemed amply sufficient, and we left the ship just as certain of a bloodless prize as we were of our existence. Three marines had been placed in each boat, in order to attract notice, in the event of one or two French soldiers being in the neighbourhood.

We approached the land about noon, and shortly were within pistol-shot. It was a fine calm day, the shore looking attractive beyond measure to our long-wandering eyes ; the wood which overhung the right-hand entrance of the bay cast a calm and beautiful shade over the landscape. At the extremity of the bay stood a low hut, which could scarcely be dignified by the name of a cottage, near which

an old woman sat spinning, who continued her toil without bestowing the slightest notice on the approach of her nation's enemies. It was a dead calm, and "ocean slumbered like an unweaned child." The boat almost silently sprang through the water; and war and all its horrors seemed far distant from this pretty, retired spot.

Suddenly was heard the report of a musket. The bowman was a corpse! A ball had been fired from behind a rock on the left-hand entrance, and that first shot was fatal: it was succeeded by another from the same place, and one marine was disabled; a third tore the cravat from the lieutenant's neck, but otherwise was harmless; a fourth, and the cockswain lost his arm. Still no one was visible; and the distance of time between each shot convinced us that we had not more than two people opposed to us at the most.

This deliberate murder was by no means pleasant. Concealed behind the rock, the Frenchmen fired in perfect security; and so small were the apertures from which they issued their destruction, that they were imperceptible to us. We gave three cheers, and pulled right for the place. Only one more shot was fired, and that struck an already wounded man. A small sandy cove offered a landing, and one and all, saving the wounded, jumped on shore, and commenced a search for the enemy. The lieutenant, myself, and a marine, took one direction; the other marine and the boat's crew began to examine the rock near which we had landed. In the mean time the other boats pulled to the vessel, cut her cable, and began to tow her out. To this there was not the slightest opposition, and not a man was to be seen in the vicinity of the bay.

After examining every place with the utmost precaution, we had well nigh declared the search as fruitless; when, in turning a narrow point of rock which led to a wider path, another shot convinced us we were close to our enemy. We pushed on, one after the other, for the path was rugged and narrow, until, coming into a broader and more open view, we perceived a man and boy retreating with all speed. The instant we hailed the former to

stop, he turned round and fired. It was a harmless shot. The lieutenant instantly fired, but missed his mark ; and the marine who levelled his musket was desired to do the same, but to be cautious not to hit the child. The Frenchman, who had loaded his musket as he retreated, turned round and fired again. It was so completely a running fight and fire, that little harm was likely to occur. The marine now stopped, and, resting his gun over a small projection of a rock, fired, and shot the child : he fell in the act of offering another cartridge to the French soldier. The father instantly dropped his musket, and fell by the side of his son. Of course we made a rush to the spot, and both were prisoners in a moment. The soldier seemed as insensible to our movements as if we were miles from the spot : he perfectly disregarded our approach : he had seated himself in the centre of the road, and, having placed the boy's head upon his lap, began to wipe away the blood as it oozed from a wound in the child's forehead. On being desired to get up and follow us, he paid not the least attention. The world and the world's light were shut to him ; he saw not — thought not — spoke not ; but, with a kind of mechanical motion, apparently involuntary, he wiped and wiped the blood, as the increasing flow gushed, through the wound. The eye rested upon the spot ; but with such inanimation as almost made it a mockery of sight. There were no tears, no sighs ; and, save now and then a gurgle in the child's throat, as he made an endeavour to breathe, the stillness of death itself could not have been more profound. At last a shivering seized the boy ; the eye became fixed and glassy ; and the opened jaw, gradually distending, marked the rapid approach of death ; — then came one short convulsive sigh, and the boy was a corpse.

My voice, like the death-ravens, croaked out the miserable truth ; on which the father sprang from his seat, the marine brought his bayonet to the charge, and the Frenchman endeavoured to throw himself upon its point ; but the marine, as the father rushed on, dropped his musket, and encircled him in his arms. We immediately secured his hands, and desired him to lead us to the beach



near the cottage. The marine carried the dead boy ; and the father walked by the side, his eyes riveted on the corpse, in perfect silence, without a tear, and apparently without a thought. We certainly did not return the way we advanced, for we had passed our boat before we came suddenly upon the rear of the cottage. The woman was still at her wheel ; she was very old, and apparently childish. She never raised her eyes from her employment until we were within about two yards of her, when, lifting her head, she fixed her eyes upon her son, bound, and in the custody of strangers : she gave a violent shriek ; and, after gazing a short second, she turned the wheel again and began to spin out her thread. The shriek was not ineffectual ; for a fine woman, about thirty, immediately rushed from the hut, and there saw, in painful reality, her husband a prisoner, her child dead, and her mother an idiot. She looked first at her parent, and then rushed to seize her dead child from the arms of its murderer. She kissed it, hugged it, gazed on it ; — then, giving one deep and audible sigh, fell at the feet of her mother. The husband had been unbound, and looked at the scene in perfect stone-like apathy ; the grandmother still turned the wheel and pinched the thread with all the indifference of mechanism ; the wife still clung to the dead child, which she convulsively grasped ; and we, the cause of all this ruin and desolation, remained with fixed eyes upon the melancholy sight before us.

We hastened from this scene of grief, which had rendered a nearly imbecile woman perfectly so, a mother childless, and a husband distracted ; even when our oars splashed in the water, and the boat, freighted with so much mischief, left the shore, and we were nearly clear of the bay, we distinctly saw the whole wretched family in the same position we had left them ; as perfectly regardless of us, as if we had not been the murderers of their child, and the cause of all their miseries.

“ War ! war ! even to the knife ! ” said Palafox. Would this have satisfied the relentless butcher ? Heavens ! how much pain, anguish, poverty, and destruction had we not caused, to be the possessors of an empty vessel, which

being found not worth the trouble of sending into port, was burnt in sight of the bay. That day's work left a blot upon my existence ; and if I were to turn Mahometan, the angel who squeezed that black drop from out of my heart would ease me of the greatest bar to Paradise, leave my conscience more at rest, and make me the happier man. Often I have wished for one small dash of the stream of Lethe, to drown that day in my memory.

“ From gay to grave—from lively to severe.”

Such is ever the life of a sailor. We are the mere children of circumstances ; and those who embark in either profession (I mean military or naval), must submit to the rubs and frowns of Fortune one moment, and smile over strange and foreign scenes the next. I would not pay England so bad a compliment, as to take my readers from the present to another part of the globe, without making a remark upon the general discipline, appearance, and efficiency of the Mediterranean fleet—decidedly the finest fleet England ever possessed. The great credit of this is due to Lord Exmouth: his enemies, if he had any, must admit him to have been one of the best practical seamen that ever adorned the navy-list ; and while he placed that fleet above all others, in point of order and activity, he never did an action unworthy of a kind-hearted man, or derogatory to the character of a gentleman. I have known him in public service and private life, and a more excellent man did not exist. Oh ! it was a glorious sight to see our fleet bearing the flag of England, standing within gunshot of the harbour, where a fleet, superior in numbers, ready for sea, and amply supplied, were skulking behind their batteries, to watch the telegraph on the summit of Cape Sicie announce our approach ; to see the long line of the enemy, and their tri-coloured ensigns ; and thus to beard them in their own den. Shall we ever see these days again ? Again, I say it will be a rash man who ever attempts the blockade of a fleet ; one calm day, and he is lost ! so much for steam, as an auxiliary in war. Again, I say, no more “cuttings out;” beware of steam-boats, and gun-boats, in all enemies' possessions !

## CHAPTER XV.

WE had a large convoy under our charge when we left the station, and were bound to Portsmouth. In the morning of one of our delayed existence (for such a frigate may be called that has charge of a parcel of dull, heavy ships to wait for, and which has eternally to be signalizing, and firing right and left, to keep the lingering barks together), we discovered one of our ships under more than usual sail, with a whiff at the mast-head — the which is a signal that the ship bearing it is anxious to speak with the commodore. The critics must forgive this kind of common parlance in nautical matters: we say very commonly “one ship spoke another,” — not that we mean *bonâ fide* that the Agamemnon spoke the Ajax, but that the captains of the respective ships communicated together; the captains always being designated by the names of their ships. Thus if, after dark, a boat having the captain on board approaches the ship, the sentry on the gangway hails in the following way — “Boat ahoy!” the answer would be — “Menelaus”: and thus the figure of speech, as used above, is not quite so strange an anomaly as may at first appear. The Menelaus hove-to; and on counting the convoy, we missed a very smart schooner, the fastest sailer of our company, which had in consequence been used as a whipper-in. No sooner had the ship come within hail, than the master informed us that he had some of the men on board belonging to the schooner missing. They were immediately sent for, and related the following wonderful event. The night had been one of those beautiful calm nights so often witnessed in that delightful climate.

“We had,” said the mate (for the master was drowned), “a very light air last night, until about eleven o’clock; at which time the Susan (I think that was her name) was between the sternmost and the next ship in the convoy. We were under all sail, as was the vessel astern, endeavouring to near the frigate; a sudden squall came on, and, before any thing could be done to relieve the schooner,

she was capsized. The captain and his wife were in the cabin, and in vain endeavoured to get on deck ; the schooner sunk almost immediately, and we all clung to a spar which was on the booms, and which, by some good fortune floated clear of the wreck."

This was a very short, but perfectly unintelligible story ; for how a squall could have come with such violence as to have upset a laden vessel, and that no other vessel of the convoy should have felt it, savoured much of the marvellous ; but it was all true enough : it was a white squall, and those who have had the misfortune to be caught in such, know how tremendous they are—how perfectly impossible to be guarded against, from their being imperceptible, and likewise over what a very narrow space they travel. A simoom sweeps over the desert in the same manner ; and Bruce relates, that when the Arabs pointed to its approach, he could only discover a very light red-coloured appearance : after it had passed, he mentions it as a *strip* of air, hardly perceptible ; yet it whizzed over them audibly enough, as they, in imitation of the camels, buried their faces in the sand. Exaggerated as white squalls may be, certain it is that the *Pretty Susan* was lost, and only three of her crew saved by the sternmost vessel, which happened, most providentially, to be in the schooner's wake.

The morning following, a small vessel was discovered near our convoy ; and as we were abreast of Algiers, we immediately apprehended she might be one of those sea-sharks who swallow up friends or foes indiscriminately, and who are known by the opprobrious term of pirate. We were soon alongside of her, and captured, or rather recaptured, a Spanish settee from Algiers, who had the night previous been taken by a French privateer brig.

On warning the mast-head man to keep a good lookout, he reported a vessel right a-head, which, from the calmness of the preceding night, and the situation, we knew must be an enemy. We crowded all sail, leaving our convoy under the charge of a formidable-looking Smyrnanian ; and towards evening we could see the chase distinctly from the deck. At sun-set we took one of those light partial flaws of wind so common in these climates, and by eight

o'clock she was hull up. It was a beautiful moonlight night, and towards eleven fell a dead calm. It was evident the chase was sweeping ; for although she was and had been becalmed, she occasionally altered her position, and gradually grew more indistinct to the sight. The boats were resorted to, and about two A.M. we were alongside. It was, as usual, "three cheers and hurrah for the first on board !" The opposition was trifling, and in five minutes she was a prize. One man, who had fixed himself aft on the larboard quarter, was fighting like a dragon ; and on my kindly interfering to save his life, by warning him of the folly of opposing himself against such fearful odds, he made a desperate cut at me. Fortunately we practised "single-sticks" on board the *Menelaus*, and my head, thick as it is, was defended by my cutlass — the crew immediately rushing on and securing the prisoner, who, to give him due credit, fought to the very last, with as much desperation as a gambler plays his last stake. He was an ugly, sour-looking fellow, with only one eye, a very dark countenance, and a slouch in his manner, very like an English tar. I spoke to him in French, which he evidently understood, although he affected ignorance. I then tried him in Italian ; at this he shook his head in the negative. A little dose of Spanish was next proffered, to which he made no answer ; so, quite in despair at finding a medium of communication, I offered all I ever knew of Turkish. It was of no use ; we could make nothing of him ; he was either deaf, ignorant, sulky, or capricious ; so we handed him on board the frigate, and put him in irons under the half-deck, until he should find his tongue. There was an evident mystery about him ; the crew of the privateer all disowned him, yet none would say who or what he was. The sentinel under whose charge he was placed, hearing our one-eyed friend and his companion in a low conversation, listened with great attention ; but whenever he approached the prisoners, the whisper ceased, and a snore was substituted. This naturally excited the curiosity of the marine, who now walked always much nearer his charge, at first without hearing a word ; shortly, however, the prisoners

began again, and the sentinel distinctly caught two English words: he now paid greater attention; and finally heard a whole sentence in our "hoarse, grunting, guttural tongue," which placed it beyond a doubt that the prisoner was an Englishman. This was duly reported to the corporal, who told the serjeant, who mentioned it to his officer, who carried it to the first-lieutenant; and thus, having ascended the ladder of official etiquette, it was properly made known to the captain.

The next morning all the prisoners were mustered on deck and examined; our friend, however, kept a very guarded silence, or only answered that he was French, which was an evident falsehood to even the most superficial smatterer in that nasal language. He was singled out from the rest, and the whole of the frigate's crew were ordered to pass by him one by one, and attentively to remark him, in order to discover who he might be. At this he changed into as many colours as a dying dolphin, and, like the fish, ultimately settled into a pale yellow, something between an orange tint and a straw-bonnet hue; even the mahogany of his countenance was not proof against Jack's eyes. Numbers passed him—until one of the fore-top men looked more eagerly than the rest, called him by his proper name, and declared him to be one of the mutineers of a gun-boat from Cadiz, who had murdered the midshipman, and deserted to the enemy. A string of evidence was soon got up; the prisoner was again made over to the custody of the master-at-arms, and placed in irons, and notice was given him that he would, on our arrival in Gibraltar, be tried at a court-martial, with certainly as pretty a prospect of being hung as any man, however tired of life, might wish for.

On our arrival, the court was ordered to assemble on board the *St. Juan*, Sir Peter Parker being the president. My usual ill luck attended me: I was nominated as principal evidence; and as the prisoner could say nothing in his defence, excepting that the crew of the privateer had forced him to fight (which, however, there was no occasion for him to do, after the rest had surrendered), he was

found guilty, and sentenced to be hung at the fore yard-arm of some one of his Majesty's ships.

In course of time, the ship and her convoy arrived safe and sound in Portsmouth harbour, and we became one of the "Channel-gropers" (as they dignified ships on the home station): henceforth we were to buffet the Bay of Biscay, instead of the smooth Mediterranean, and to have the benefit of all the fogs, snow-storms, gales of wind, mist, rains, and squalls—instead of the delightfully even climate, the sun-shining days, and star-sparkling nights of our late station. But, like good subjects and better sailors, we prepared to obey orders, and to refit the frigate. About a month after our arrival in Portsmouth, we sailed on a cruise off L'Orient; and I shall beg my readers to be as gratified by the perusal of the next chapter, as I was at the reality of the subject.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

WE had bobbed about the Channel and the bay without adding to our fortunes, more than a few miserable *chasse-marées*, laden with wine, could augment the balance-sheet of the agent's account. We had chased a French frigate, and got within gun-shot of her; but she disappointed our hopes, by succeeding in entering the harbour of Brest. Hitherto, therefore, all the keen cruising of Sir Peter Parker had been baffled, or rather fortune had not thrown a vessel in our track, and consequently we had wandered over the ocean in vain.

It was on Valentine's day that, at daybreak in the morning, the men were busy drying the decks, and getting ready to make all sail the ship would bear on a wind—the middy's legs as red as a soldier's coat; for in those times, officers of the watch, midshipmen, marines, &c. all debobbed themselves of the lower furniture of the extremities, and paddled about the wet deck without shoes or stockings: this is very good for the health, whatever tender

mammas or fashionable doctors may say. God knows we never heard about the danger of walking in an easterly wind, or going out before breakfast with an empty stomach, until we became fashionable gentlemen on shore, and had nothing to mind but our health. I remember a fat first-lieutenant, who had been kicked about the world in every climate and every country, and who looked as rosy as a red cabbage, and as plump as a water-melon, once telling me, as he walked up Regent Street, with his coat closely buttoned up—"By heavens! I can't stand this any longer; this cursed easterly wind *blows through me*." How are the mighty fallen!

"Now, youngster," said Mr. Seagrove, the second-lieutenant, and who had the morning watch, "look carefully round the ship, and see if you can make out any thing like a sail in this thick fog."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied the curly-headed youngster, and forthwith placed himself in the weather quarter, and, holding both hands so as to make an artificial telescope, he cautiously swept the horizon from the lee quarter, round the stern, to the weather beam—as he passed Seagrove, who was hurrying the after-guard with their swabs, and making the main-top men coil the ropes down in round coils. He was again desired "to wipe the water from his eyes and try again."

Seagrove was an active officer—a rough one, but a good one; he had a system, and a system is every thing in an officer: a man who begins one thing, and before it is finished begins another, and who trots the men about like the horses at Astley's, can never be much liked or respected on board. Now, it was a part of Seagrove's plan to keep every man on the alert, and make every midshipman do his duty: he once made me walk on the weather gangway two hours after my watch, because I was looking over the lee quarter, when I ought to have been walking the deck.—"Keep a sharp look-out, youngster," said he, as the poor middy placed himself on the weather gangway, and began to skim the fancied horizon, "never mind the wind and the fog."



"I think, sir," said the youngster, "that I see a vessel here."

"Where? where?" said Seagrove, jumping to the gangway.

"There, sir, there," replied the boy; "it looks darker than in any other direction; she must be a large ship, if it is one."

"I don't see any thing at all but this cursed fog," remarked the lieutenant. "Here, quarter-master, pop your face to windward, and see if you can see any thing." The old weather-beaten sailor, after looking a short time, turned round and declared he saw nothing at all; and that he *had* seen the Peak of Teneriffe 180 miles distant; and as he went back to the wheel, he declared he once saw a smuggler a mile off, when no one else on board could see the jib-boom end.

"I am quite certain," said Walcot, the midshipman, "that I do see something, and in that direction."

"Well," said Seagrove, "there can be no harm in being ready. Boatswain's mate, watch, make sail: man the fore-tack and jib-halyards;" after which the spanker and the main-sail were set; we were under double-reefed topsails, and the hands were sent aloft to loose the top-gallant sails. "There, sir," said the midshipman, "there she is, as plain as a pikestaff."—"I see her," said Seagrove; "jump down, youngster, and tell the captain; look how she bears; and mind, the wind is N.E.; mention that we have made sail, and that the stranger looms very large."

"Ay, ay, sir," and before the words were out of his mouth, he was half-way down the hatchway; the top-gallant-sails were set, and another reef shaken out of the top-sails.

Sir Peter followed the youngster on deck; and Crease, the first-lieutenant, who never slept, but was a kind of a Cerberus, with always one eye open, heard Seagrove's voice making sail, and was up to use his eyes,—by the by, Crease had capital optics for a prize or a lunar, but was much oftener on deck than the midshipmen liked. "How does she bear?" said Crease.

"N.E." replied Seagrove, "right in the wind's eye."

"How many bells is it?" asked the captain, who slipped out of bed like a shot out of a shovel, and was on deck in a minute.

"Five, sir," responded Seagrove.

"Pipe the hammocks up immediately, and beat to quarters. I can't see her though," remarked Sir Peter, "and a man must have an eye like a gimlet, which would look through a deal plank, to see through this fog."

"There she is again," said Seagrove. At this moment the fog began to clear, and there was a ship snug enough under her top-sails, jib, and spanker; she had a poop, and looked as large as a line-of-battle ship, evidently a foreigner, and not the least doubt existed of her being an enemy. "Bear a hand and stow the hammocks," said the captain; "beat to quarters immediately." Down jumped Seagrove to the eight after-guns on the main-deck. Crease took charge of the ship, and in five minutes we were in a state to have commenced action.

The stranger was about a mile to windward of us, within point-blank range, and as yet certainly had not seen us.

"Fire the fore-castle gun across his hawse, and hoist the colours."—"Main-top there," said Crease, "hoist the short pendant."

"Ay, ay, sir." The gun was fired, and the proud flag of old England floated from the peak of one of the finest ships in his Majesty's navy.

No sooner had this hostile demonstration taken place, than the ship to windward hoisted the tricoloured flag, dropped her courses, and began to make all sail. We were at this time about twenty miles to leeward of L'Orient, to which there could be no doubt the enemy was bound.

"Main-deck there," said the captain.

Both lieutenants stationed on that deck came to the waist and answered.

"Begin from forward, and fire steadily at his rigging; take deliberate aim, and let the smoke clear away between each shot."

Whiz went the first shot over and over the stranger, and fell harmless nearly half a mile the other side of him. This freshened their intellects a little; they let fall the top-

gallant sails, and were in the act of sheeting them home, when the second shot went between her masts, and stopped future operations ; she immediately struck her colours and bore up.

To us this was rather unintelligible ; she wore the appearance in the fog, which still remained, of a very large frigate with a poop, and that she should strike without returning a shot, neither pleased the captain nor the ship's company, for a little practice at the guns in earnest is very requisite sometimes ; we find out the wolves from the sheep, the steady from the boisterous, and calm courage from helter-skelter bravado. 'The Menelaus shortened sail, and hove-to. When she neared us to about a quarter of a mile, we fired another shot over her, and she rounded-to on our weather quarter ; a boat was lowered, and Crease sent to take possession of her ; immediately he was on board, she again bore up. Sir Peter sat on the taffrail with a speaking-trumpet in his hand ; and when the prize came within hail, we joyfully listened to the news.

"What is she, Crease ?" said our noble chief, his eyes flashing with animation : he *was* a handsome brave man, if ever there was one.

"She is a Spanish ship, which has been captured by a French frigate a fortnight since off Madeira."

"Where is she from ?" continued the captain.

"From Lima, bound to Cadiz," was the reply.

"I say, Crease, ships don't go to Lima for *holy stones* ; what is she laden with ?"

Here I must interrupt the conversation by informing the reader, who may not be a nautical man, that holy stones are certain square pieces of Portland or other stones of that kind, used in the navy to scrub the decks ; and which, from the position in which the men are obliged to place themselves, kneeling down when using them, are familiarly called *holy stones*, or bibles.

"Doubloons and dollars," replied Crease ; "you must send, if you please, sir, a party of marines on board ; for the crew are plundering the prize."

"Never mind that," replied the captain ; "send the prisoners on board. Pipe the other boats' crews away,

Mr. Seagrove. Secure the guns, and beat the retreat. When the prisoners come on board, keep them on the starboard side of the quarter-deck abaft the mizen-mast, and place a couple of marines to keep them there."

A very gentlemanly lieutenant of the French navy, accompanied by two midshipmen, shortly afterwards made their appearance; the former wearing his epaulettes hanging over his breast, instead of on his shoulders. They looked very pale, very disgusting, and very dirty. They belonged to the *Atalanta*, a large frigate, that had been out on a cruise, and had made this prize, which from her great value, they had endeavoured to send into port. Stupid boobies! had they taken the money on board their own ship and burnt the prize, they and their riches would have gone together, had they been captured! whereas, it so happened that the *Atalanta*, after a long chase from us, got safe into harbour, and is yet to occupy a place in this chapter, and I hope, to contribute to the amusement of the reader. The French lieutenant was popped down below, and the midshipmen handed over to the larboard berth to sip cocoa, eat hard biscuit, and make their minds up to go to prison.

The prisoners were placed abaft, notwithstanding the drizzling rain. They looked as well clothed as the gravedigger in *Hamlet* before he disencumbers himself, and kept whispering to each other, some cried. I know I should have cried, had I been in their ill-luck. To be within twenty miles of their port, with a prize having 700,000*l.* sterling on board, besides her cargo, and all the plate and valuable articles of the Duke of Medina Sidonia—he having shipped himself, his wife, his family, his all, in this rich argosie, and he having died, and his household gods and goddesses being prisoners—to be captured, yes, captured, with the port actually in sight; for when the fog cleared up, we saw the French land; and, what was much worse, his Majesty's ship the *Rippon*, then under the command of Sir Christopher Cole; she had heard our guns, and claimed and obtained a share in our prize.

Now, who could, in the situation of these poor devils of Frenchmen, ever mention the word fortune, without a

malediction sufficient of itself to send the soul of any heretic into a very uncomfortable situation? They had been chased often, they had eluded pursuit, they had passed a line of frigates, through which it was almost impossible to pass, and when within hail of their port, a thick fog clears up, and they find a large ship close on board of them, which rendered an escape impossible, and which placed them in the hands of their enemies, without a struggle for safety. It was certainly about as much ill-luck as could befall any man in a foggy day.

It was deemed advisable to search the prisoners, and we began with the lieutenant; at first he "*sacré'd*" a little, and hector'd a good deal, but seeing no remedy, he consented to the degradation. The first operation was to unship his epaulettes, under the bullion of which, instead of finding a stuffing of cotton, we found a stuffing of gold, in the shape of twelve doubloons, which we took the liberty of placing in a midshipman's hat, and ultimately conveyed, when the hat was pretty well filled, to the captain's sofa in the after-cabin.

This search was not made in public; a screen was run up the starboard side of the after-part of the main-deck, and the operation was conducted under the directions of the master, in company with the master-at-arms and sergeant of marines; the youngsters being employed to take away the hats, and to empty them on the sofa. The master was a Guernsey man, and seemed to know the stow-holes of the Frenchmen. Round the bodies of the common seamen we found lots of doubloons sewed in canvass; the gold coin being in layers of four each, and the doublet going the full round of the back, where it was laced like a pair of ladies' stays. From between, or rather mixed up in the long matted dirty locks of the French sailors, who eschewed combs as a lamb does hemlock, we took some gold coin. At the discovery of every new place of concealment, the victim sighed audibly, and cursed loudly. Some had money secured under the arm-pits; in short, in every place where it could be concealed, there we found it, the Guernsey master making every man open his mouth, and

stripping them as bare as ever Adam was drawn in a French print.

On this day I satisfied myself as to a wish I had long entertained, namely, "to roll in gold:" when we had placed a vast quantity of doubloons on the sofa, I stretched myself at full length, and got one of the youngsters to shower the money all over me. In the midst of this uncommon gratification, in walked the captain; fortunately for me, he laughed at the idea, and actually besprinkled me himself. I can give no better notion of the weight these twenty men managed to conceal about their persons than to mention, that we took from them the amazing amount of twelve thousand pounds sterling. In their chest they had secreted the silver spoons of the dead Duke—watches, ornaments of all kinds, in virgin silver, and every valuable article which came in their power. They seemed to think it very hard that we should take from them what they had taken from the Spaniards. Amongst the valuables found in the lieutenant's box, was a peacock in virgin silver; the eyes, and all the adornments of the tail, for the proud bird exhibited itself in all its glory, were studded with precious stones; the whole being one of the most beautiful ornaments to a dinner-table ever seen in England. It was made a present to the Prince Regent by universal consent, and is now in the plate-room of his present Majesty in Windsor Castle.

We left the prisoners just as bare as unfledged birds, as to their ill-got wealth; but we scrupulously returned every sou of *French* money; to be sure it did not amount to much, for if I recollect rightly, amongst the whole twenty-two gallant Frenchmen, we only found fifteen francs. which we could bear to return very well; thus setting a laudable example of respecting *private* property, however *large* the amount.

The galley of the Menelaus heard many a sailor's anecdote of wealth, of splendid prizes, and of rich galleons; but none rivalled the reality of the St. John the Baptist and her treasures. Such a capture was a great windfall; it excited the poetic genius of the purser's steward, who, laying aside the mess account-books, after due study and

much fidget produced the following two lines, which were soon in every sailor's mouth —

“ Dug from Lima's golden mine,  
We hail it as our Valentine.”

She was too valuable to be allowed to sail by herself ; therefore, after the prisoners were exchanged, and the prize manned, we bore up for Plymouth, and saw the St. John the Baptist safely anchored under the protection of the Salvador del Mundo.

When we entered Plymouth Sound we attracted much attention. The yard-arms were decorated with watches, and on each truck was fastened a gold candlestick. The Jews, those vermin who ferret out gold as truly as a terrier dog does a badger, soon surrounded the ship. The ladies were more eager than ever to swear eternal friendship and inviolable love ; they then recognized their friends, who, a few weeks before, they had deserted and plundered. In fact, we saw in low life, what many a man has found to exist in the upper walks ; that any sacrifice could be made, providing money — money, the mammon of all unrighteousness — was plentiful. Nay, we found that money gave talent, intellect, beauty, accomplishments, &c., and that, before that prize was taken, although we were not considered as conjurors, we were now the veriest magicians on the ocean. Even the Jews were this time deceived, for we only had one-eighth allotted to us, she being only a recapture ; and out of that eighth, the Rippon was to walk off with a half.

Having for the moment had the supreme gratification of playing the part of men of fortune, and consequently, being much beloved and respected, we were obliged to obey the signal of the port-admiral, and put to sea to resume our cruising off our old station. Be it known to all people who are in the slightest degree tinged with superstition, that we sailed on a Friday. The Irish peasants in Galway would never take a piece of lighted wood from a neighbour's house on that unlucky day, for all the happy omens which in former times gulled our ancestors. It blew fresh, and we were shortly on our ground. For days we bobbed about without adding to our immense fortunes ; but, on

Friday morning, we discovered a large frigate to leeward, under a press of sail, steering in for the land. Every man on board made her out to be a Frenchman. All sail was made in chase, and every plan which could be devised to make the *Menelaus* sail faster was put in execution. In the mean time, our chase was not timid as to carrying on every stitch of sail, and of availing herself of every gust of wind to forward her escape.

As we had sailed on a Friday, it was useless to expect any windfall of fortune. The fore-castle rung with disasters and ill-luck, which was the sure attendant upon that ominous day; and, after a long and weary pursuit of our adversary, when we had run her within four miles of the port to which she directed her course, we could reach her with our long guns. Still she pressed on all the canvass she could bear: and, as the distance was short before she would be in perfect security, we knew that the bird had escaped the fowler; and at sun-set had the mortification to see her anchor in the small, but secure and well-fortified harbour of Concarneau. We shortened sail, and anchored about a long shot from the shore, keeping our glasses well directed all night, to be wide awake that no fire-ships, or such like annoyances, should fall upon us unawares. In the morning, a battery near the beach commenced practising their engineer officers; and, as the bunglers became gradually expert, before eight o'clock we found it requisite to remove the frigate out of the range of all shot and shell. At eleven o'clock I was sent in the gig with a flag of truce; and, under this peaceable protection, I was to deliver to the captain of the frigate a challenge to fight him and his frigate at any hour most convenient. Nobody could say this was not very polite. The letter hinted that, if he refused such honourable propositions, we should attribute it to plain cowardice. It is the custom for all boats carrying flags of truce to be unarmed, and on no account to have in them leads and lines, compasses or spy-glasses; in short, to have nothing but the boat's crew, the oars, and the boat-hook. Making myself as much like an officer as I could, I proceeded towards the harbour unmolested, until I was close to the entrance, when a shot from the battery warned me to



lay on my oars: this I did; and shortly afterwards saw a large launch, manned by about six-and-twenty men; a swivel in the bows; in short, a boat altogether more calculated to go on some desperate service than to come out to a flag of truce stuck upon a flag-staff in the bows of a six-oared, unarmed gig. They came floundering up to us within boat-hook's length, and then set up a jabber more like baboons than sailors, to stop their lumbering launch from coming stem on to us. When they got their boat in a proper position on our beam, the conversation commenced on their part, by asking the reason of the flag of truce. They were told it was merely to deliver a letter to the captain of the frigate: this they desired we should leave on a rock on the left-hand entrance, which we forthwith prepared to do. They asked the name of the English frigate; but to my question on the same subject they refused to make any answer; and we, leaving the letter on the appointed spot, quietly resumed our apparently listless station to await the answer.

About half an hour had elapsed when the launch again made her appearance, placed the answer on the rock, when we landed and brought it off; after which both boats ranged up alongside of one another. On this occasion, as the launch was stationary, we took good care to approach in a proper man-of-war-like style, tossing the oars *up*, after having fixed the boat in her proper position.

"Well, sir," quoth the Frenchman, who was a lieutenant, and a very gentlemanly-looking man, "I hope the answer will be quite satisfactory."

"Quite," replied I, "if it mentions your intentions of coming out of harbour; that will make ample amends for our long chase."

"What did you say, sir," continued our enemy, "was the name of the frigate?"

"The Menelaus," I replied.

"And her captain's name?"

"Sir Peter Parker."

"A knight?"

"No, a baronet." This explanation was made with great difficulty; my French friends to this day (except in

the higher walks of life) not exactly comprehending the distinction.

"Have you been long cruising off here?"

"Not very long," I replied; "but quite long enough to be tired of the station."

Here a pause took place in the interrogatories of the polite nation; and I, after a proper preface, in which I mentioned my readiness to answer any question not connected with the number of our cruisers or our fleets, begged the lieutenant would accord me the same favour, and inform me what fine frigate it was that I trusted soon would be our antagonist, and which would no doubt gallantly uphold the honour of that country whose flag she bore.

"She is the *Atalanta*," was the reply.

"The *Atalanta*!" As I said this with considerable surprise, a very inquisitive demonstration took place on board the launch; and my ejaculation was followed by a request to know the reason of my astonishment.

Willing not to be impertinent, but to follow Lord Chesterfield's advice, "to beat my enemies by civility first, and a broomstick afterwards," I answered that now I comprehended the reason why she refused to meet us at sea, or rather to await our attack the preceding day, as, from her successful cruising, she must be very short of men; and that was quite a sufficient reason, when so near her own port, not to have risked an action.

This I saw was well received: it provided an excuse for a thing inexcusable, for at that moment she had upwards of four hundred men on board; while the *Menelaus* in her best day never saw more than three hundred and fifty on her books. There was a slight whispering between the lieutenant and a midshipman; and after a short pause, the conversation was resumed.

"You have heard of our success, then?" said the officer.

"O yes," I replied; "our intelligence is so good, that we always hear of the depredations of our enemies. But," continued I, "if all reports are true, you have injured Spain more than England."

This produced a gleam of satisfaction over the countenances of the launch's crew, who, unmindful of all the nice

rules of discipline, had let their oars swing fore and aft on the iron tholes, and were lolling over the gunwales like a parcel of schoolboys catching fish. Little did they dream of the rod I had in pickle for them!—little did they know the tittering joy of satisfaction which animated my countenance, and made me answer with an almost unguarded rapidity.

“Yes! we have taken a most precious prize—a galleon laden with money, besides a very rich cargo,” said the midshipman.

“We have, long ago,” I replied, “heard of that calamity. The *St. Jean de Baptiste* had been eagerly expected at Cadiz; and the government were anxious for her arrival to reimburse their soldiers and sailors.”

“They will not do it this time,” said one of the men “for she is snug enough in harbour.”

“Yes,” I replied, “we know of her arrival; and have actually seen her a few days since.”

“Where?” was the general question.

Here I, putting on one of the most modest looks conceivable in a midshipman, replied, with a forced hesitation: “In—in—in Plymouth harbour!”

“*Tonnerre de Dieu!*” ejaculated the whole crew at once. “*Mais, monsieur, ce n’est pas possible.—Bah! les sacres crapauds de la Tamise!*”

“Possible or probable,” replied I, “is another business: all I know is, that in Plymouth harbour we left her a fortnight ago; and it must be a very rum kind of wind which could blow her to *L’Orient*.”

“She was bound to *L’Orient*,” said the lieutenant.

“Very true,” replied I; “and she was within sight of it when *we* captured her.”

At this announcement all the French sailors grinned like a batch of sick monkeys. They extended their arms and their hands—made as many faces as a child taking physic—and, with wonderful disregard to all kinds of propriety, uttered one deep-toned dissyllable, which is not very generally used in female society, and which, if it were true, would be sufficient to exclude us from it. The men in our boat, who did not understand one word of the

conversation, seemed to think that some war was brewing, which we should decidedly get the worst of; and they looked at me with that kind of glance, as much as to say, "I think the sooner we are out of this the better."

"I wish, now," said the lieutenant, "that we had conveyed her in ourselves."

"I wish to God you had!" I replied; "for you would now have been watching her."

This was too plain not to be understood, and caused a frown of displeasure to cover the before placid face of the French officer. I admit it was excessively bad taste; but, as the Latin grammar has it, "*Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit.*" I was young, and just in proper mood to exercise my revenge by any sharp answer. No man likes to persuade himself that bad news is true: it always flies quickly enough; but we invariably try to disbelieve it. It must have been this feeling which prompted the following questions.

"Without doubt," said the midshipman, "you remember the name of the officer who commanded the *St. Juan* when you captured her?"

"Oh! most certainly," I answered; and I mentioned his name.

"*Tonnerre de Dieu — sacre!*" and out went the hands and arms to their full extent, which were shaken at me, accompanied by another monkey-chatter and grin.

It was now beyond all dispute that their prize was taken; and, after a few more cross-examinations relative to the number of the men, a mark on the midshipman's face, and such-like damning convictions, the French officer bowed very gracefully, which I, as gracefully, I flatter myself, imitated; and, to the last words of "*Adieu, monsieur; au plaisir de vous revoir,*" I coolly answered, "*Au plaisir de vous revoir, monsieur, hors du port.*" This last incivility produced a general chatter, which terminated in the French sailors making preparations to depart, after a simultaneous ejaculation of "*Mille tonnerres!*" Having warned our men to take good care to let their oars fall into the water together, I called out "*Down!*" The bowman in dropping his oar gave the handle a twist: this

brought the blade a little on a slew, which, on meeting the water, slapped a wholesome quantity in the face of the French bowman; whereupon a most uncommon shout from our enemy announced his displeasure. He endeavoured to resent the injury by splashing with his oar. In his excessive rage he missed the water, and fell flat back, with his heels kicking about like a Dutch tumbler, to the infinite annoyance of his crew, and the great amusement of ours. As they increased their distance, we gradually lost the sound of the plentiful abuse lavished upon the English nation, and on the fortunate Menelaus in particular.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

THE captain of the French frigate's answer amounted to a positive refusal to come out and be taken: it contained a certain quantity of truth, and a pretty moderate quantity of the contrary, but was decisive as to the refusal to fight; whereupon we fired a blank cartridge, in perfect contempt of the great nation, and got under weigh to resume our cruising.

We shortly afterwards formed one of a flying squadron, consisting of the *Superb* and the *Fly*, and proceeded in pursuit of Commodore Rogers. We were unsuccessful in all our endeavours, and the cruise had few charms and many grievances. Cruising on the equator in the month of June cannot be supposed very agreeable; for, after passing the Cape Verd Islands, and running down near the line, we got into the doldrums, as the sailors call the calms so prevalent in that part of the world, and were baked as brown as Portuguese. We were on an allowance of water—a misery in hot climates quite inconceivable. We slanted down the coast of South America, visited Pernambuco, and on our return touched at Fernando de Noronha, a small island about three degrees to the southward of the equator, and between the thirty-second and thirty-third parallel of west longitude. To this island the

Portuguese banish their male convicts; and, horrible as it must appear from its lonely situation, its sandy soil and scanty vegetation, the bitter reflection of expatriation is doubled when the unfortunate wretch is informed that henceforth, to his last day, he is never again to gaze on a woman. It has been one of the merciful decrees of the burning legislators of Portugal, that the people thus unhappily condemned never again to behold their own country, are, by a refinement of cruelty, never allowed to enjoy the common privilege of man. It is hard to conceive what reason can be alleged for this wanton tyranny; if you have got rid of a bad subject by banishment, why not make him content with his lot, if possible?—why make him so miserable?—why so desperately degrade him? The only answer which can be given is this:—that if their wives and families were permitted to share the banishment, they might, in pursuance of the law of nature, increase and multiply, and ultimately might declare this miserable island independent. Then future ages might see the independent flag of the large island of Fernando de Noronha insulting the stained tablecloth of a flag which represents the unfortunate kingdom of Portugal, and ministers from the island in close communication with the legislators of Lisbon. The heat of the unnatural island, for so the sailors term it, is beyond all conception—its situation not being within the range of the trade-winds—and the ground, parched and barren, produces barely sufficient for the unfortunate inhabitants. Here the social affections wither, even where nature had destined them most to flourish; here love and all its blessings are unknown; and here is the living reality of what brutes men become, without the kind and fostering care of the better part of the creation.

If for their former crimes the culprits may have merited banishment—to the government under which they had the misfortune to be born is to be attributed the sins into which they may be forced by the unnatural position in which they are placed. Strange as it may appear, the birds of Venus, the doves, are more plentiful in this island than in any other spot on the globe; as if in horrid mockery of the poor devils, doomed to live out so wretched

an existence, every branch throughout the low wood which encircles the village, can show a feathered pair, billing and cooing in all the warmth of affection and love. In revenge for this tantalising mockery, the inhabitants eat the emblem of the original they are unfeelingly condemned for ever to forego.

A midshipman's berth is by no means the abode of peace and quietness. "Man is a being who makes war!" a definition differing from Johnson, who designates the human race as a set of merchants. "Man," says the Colossus, "is a being who makes bargains." My friends were living proofs of the former. The officer who landed in the first boat brought back a report of the numerous doves which he had seen, and all hands were eager for a day's sport and a good dinner.

As we had no small shot, we had recourse to flattening bullets, and then cutting them into slugs; this operation was performed by placing an eighteen-pound shot in the lap, and putting a bullet thereon, it was flattened with a hammer. As our operations began after it was dark, many an awkward fellow hit his fingers instead of the bullet, and then grumbled at the misfortune. It so happened, that one of the elder midshipmen hit his lubberly fingers a crack enough to break the bone, and, being laughed at for his clumsiness, he forthwith laid the whole blame to the want of light, and placed the candle on his side of the table: the consequence was, that his *vis-à-vis* could not manage to make slugs without making mistakes; and in his rage he seized the candle, and placed it at his side of the table, declaring at the same time "that the church ought always to stand in the centre of the parish:" to be sure, he had placed the church, if the candle was its representation, anywhere else but in the middle of the parish; that is, if the table was considered the parish.

"What great events from trivial discords rise!"

The first-named midshipman endeavoured to seize the church; the second offender caught hold of the steeple part; a general row ensued; one threw an eighteen-pound shot at the other, which was instantly returned, luckily

without taking effect—for a shot is just as hard as a midshipman's head; and the fracas ended for the moment, by a challenge to meet on shore at daylight, and, instead of shooting doves, to shoot each other. This was the first duel I had ever been witness to. I once had, at Madeira, a little brush in the coffee-room with a marine officer. We settled the business in a moment, by each drawing our swords, and I (many thanks to the fencing-master at Durham-house), succeeded in pinning my adversary's wrist to his breast; and then started off on board as quickly as possible, quite satisfied that what is called satisfaction is about the most unsatisfactory thing in the whole world.

I was summoned at five o'clock in the morning to attend my friend; and, having obtained leave the night before, soon landed at the watering-place. The principals and seconds made a cut into the wood, and walked on until they came to a narrow path, most admirably adapted for guiding the eye, and finishing the quarrel. We measured the ground at ten paces; but as we had only a pair of small pocket pistols, with the locks on the barrels, we shortened the distance to eight, and placing the hostile parties in good positions to be shot, we told them to blaze away at discretion. One midshipman immediately availed himself of the permission, but his pistol missed fire; upon which he very quietly walked off his ground to prime it again. I maintained that a miss went for a fire, for which I was called a fool. I begged leave to have satisfaction for the insult—and got it most completely, by a box on the ear, which knocked me down; a fight-royal ensued, in the midst of which a party of the lieutenants hove in sight, and we were all bundled on board, without having had a shot at either man or bird.

So finished our duel; about as whimsical a one, and equally as innocent, as the famous affair between a gunner and a boatswain in Malta. They quarrelled about rum and religion—two things often mixed together with a methodist: after having expended about as decent a set of words as could be selected from Grose's Slang Dictionary, the gunner said the boatswain was "*no gentleman*." There was no standing this. Mr. Pipes had, it is true, been all



his life before the mast, and had associated with the very best society at either North Corner or the Point ; but he was an officer by virtue of his warrant, and that warrant made him likewise a gentleman. Pounce, the gunner, was a quiet systematic man, and proceeded to the first lieutenant, from whom he got permission for himself and the boatswain to spend the next day on shore ; he then sent his compliments to Mr. Pipes, and with his words he sent a ship's musket, and a ballast-basket full of musket-ball cartridges, selecting the ground in the vicinity of St. Antonio Gardens, as the rendezvous the next morning at sunrise.

Before sun-rise Pipes and his boy landed in a Maltese boat, and betook themselves, muskets, ballast-baskets, and cartouch-boxes, to the appointed place ; and having loaded the musket, Pipes and Co. came to an anchor on a wall which separated two fields—for in Malta hedges are almost, if not entirely, unknown. At day-dawn the boatswain saw Mr. Pounce advancing with hasty strides to the spot, he being, at the time he was discovered, about half a mile distant ; Pipes immediately called out—"The enemy's move in sight !" and, to use his own expression, he "fired a shot across his bows, to make him heave-to." Pounce, finding the enemy had taken up a disadvantageous situation, having his back to a wall (a circumstance which has proved fatal to more than one unfortunate fellow), desired his boy, who acted as his second, to "come to an anchor, and open the magazine ;" he at the same time commencing action and blazing away at Pipes. Which of the two fired the best has not been discovered, for no trace was left of ravages committed ; from which it was inferred that the balls must have lodged some half a mile beyond the foe. It is with great satisfaction I mention the gallant behaviour of the seconds :—while the masters were loading they got ready other cartridges, bit the ends off, and looked along the barrels, indicating their approval of the aim taken, or hinting, "I think, sir, you 're pointing too much aloft ; why, it will go over his mast-head vane : " and when both bent forward to see if the shot took effect, it was invariably followed with—"I'll spoil his figure-head yet," or "I'm

blowed if I did not hull him :” in a very short time the powder was expended on both sides, the magazines were emptied, and the gunner came to the charge ; he, however, soon discovered he had omitted to bring a bayonet ; where-upon he sent his faithful squire with a flag of truce on a ramrod, which being favourably received by Pipes and his squire, the former advanced and said—“ Master says as how, sir, he’s werry sorry he forgot the baggonet—and if so be that you ’ve had enough for the present, he thinks as how you had better make a board for the Rosolio shop, whilst he sends off for the cheese-toasters ; and if so be you are contented with this, you’re to make a signal.”—Upon which, the boatswain applied his whistle to his mouth, and piped “belay,” finishing with the sound, implying “let go ;” upon which both parties put on their peace-establishment looks, and retired in good order to breakfast, over which it was understood Mr. Pounce retracted the offensive expression ; both parties making apologies to each other for being such cursed bad shots, and having occupied so much time so very unprofitably, and so very *unsatisfactorily*.

It is within the memory of man, that a duel was fought at Calcutta between two midshipmen—the cause of the quarrel I forget, that is quite immaterial—a quarrel they had, and a duel was the consequence. On this occasion the gunner and boatswain were the two seconds. As neither party had seen a duel before, and consequently had no more idea of the law on this subject than an Esquimaux has of comfort, they imagined that they were to take an active part in the concern, and repaired with their principals to an appointed spot. The ground was measured at eighteen paces ; when the gunner, who had often seen a prize-fight, and imagined a second was to behave in the present affair the same as in a boxing-match, knelt upon one knee, and placed his man thereupon, saying aloud—“Now then, Yarn, my man’s ready ; why don’t you set your backstay up ?”—Yarn called out, “that there was something the matter with the lanyard of the pistol (meaning the trigger), for that he had been endeavouring to scale the guns for half an hour, and his man swore he would have a match in pre-

ference." This delayed the affair. The gunner, however, easing the lock by means of a knife, the parties took up their places on their seconds' knees, and there loaded the pistols. Although the enmity was great on the part of the principals, the seconds had always been good friends. Now, indeed, they imbibed the rancour of their friends; and when both had answered, "All ready on this side," they each began to edge nearer to their adversaries, the seconds supporting the arm of the principal, and giving wholesome advice.—"We are quite out of range," said Priming, the gunner, "let's get close on board him before we fire." In the mean time, Yarn was recommending the first broadside; and as his principal was damning the lock because it went too hard, Yarn got his fore-finger to bear upon the trigger, and stood by for a haul. At this moment, Priming's man's pistol went off, the ball passing through the rim of Yarn's hat.—"That whizzed over my top-lights;—now, sir, blaze away!" whereupon they both hauled at the trigger, which of course lowered the muzzle of the pistol:—off it went, and the ball, instead of knocking out some of the head-rails of the enemy, struck his foot, and left him lame for life. The gunner swore "he would not strike his colours;" but the pain was so great that his principal fainted before Yarn and his man could get another shot ready; they were so occupied loading the pistol, that they never remarked that their fire had taken effect. "Bear a hand," says Yarn, "mind the cartridge, stern foremost, and seam downwards, I'll ram him home—there now—handle the lanyard, and blaze away." At this moment Priming hailed, that "his man had struck his colours;" upon which Yarn roared out, "Hurrah! now, sir, knock Priming's other eye out (he had but one), and then we'll take possession of the *prizes*." The enmity of Yarn's man died with the knowledge of the mischief he had done; in vain his second endeavoured to hold him on his knee, as he kept edging up to the enemy, whose fire he swore he had silenced; he recommended his principal to "fire another broadside and board him in the smoke." But Priming took the liberty of striking his colours in reality; he shouldered his wounded principal, and walked off with him

to a log of wood in the vicinity. Here the business was accommodated, and the parties separated, perfectly satisfied with the satisfaction.\*

While on the subject of duelling, which, by the by, has no business whatever in these pages, I will give a description of two other affairs of honour: the first was related to me by one of the principals, who declared every word to be as true as Holy Writ. As this may be of service to gentlemen who have been insulted, and who have limited means of satisfaction, I recommend a patient perusal of the anecdote.

It was during the war that two midshipmen, amongst a host of others, were prisoners at Verdun: a want of employment threw the whole set into habits of idleness; and when once people become thoroughly idle, they become uncommonly vicious, always hasty, and mostly quarrelsome. As several duels had been fought with foils, the buttons being first taken off, and the points sharpened against the stones; and as several desperate wounds had been inflicted, the police thought proper to deprive the prisoners of all weapons which could be turned to fatal purposes. In their search after these sharp instruments, they took even the pen-knives, hinting, that as the English were a boxing nation, they had better settle the dispute according to the national custom. As the means of revenge were withdrawn, quarrels became more frequent—until, at last, one very serious dispute occurred, and the parties resolved to have more *satisfaction* than a fist could possibly give. Every offensive weapon had been seized, excepting two sticks, and these sticks were so slender as to be harmless; they were about the same length. In rummaging about they found an old two-pronged fork, and the head of a broken gimlet; and with these weapons they resolved to wreak their vengeance one upon the other. Seconds being selected, the choice of evils was obtained by lot. The man to whom the gimlet fell, it was decided, should choose his distance, and give the word to begin. The lots being cast, and each being accommodated, the

\* One of the principals I met a few days back in Paris; the wounded officer is now a lieutenant, but will be lame to his last moment.

weapons were lashed to the two above-mentioned sticks, and the combatants placed upon the ground. Gimlet made his will, for Fork had a very decided advantage : it is no joke being probed with a pitch-fork for half an hour ; moreover, Fork had little to fear from Gimlet, because the very folds of the screw-part hindered its perforation to any extent. Gimlet, after taking an affectionate leave of his shipmates, and after abusing Fortune (for, as he thought, the last time, for all the tricks she had played him), buttoned his jacket close over his wrists, and desired his antagonist to approach until he was satisfied of the distance. When his foe was within reach, Gimlet desired him to advance his head so as to secure his being within range, and, by way of ascertaining the fact, he placed his weapon against the forehead of Fork, and then suddenly crying out, "Now then," he began to screw away with all his force, in order to lodge his gimlet well in the skull of his antagonist. Fork commenced offensive operations in a moment, and succeeded in bleeding his adversary in two places at every probe ; but Gimlet, unmindful of his danger, persevered in the screw system. The seconds, seeing that it would decidedly end fatally to both parties, fortunately interfered and prevented the loss of life ; but they could not prevent Fork from giving his clever, cool antagonist a last probe, exactly on the place where Hudibras whimsically placed honour—as Screw, relinquishing his weapon, exultingly turned on his heel, to chuckle over his victory. This dirty advantage of Screw, behind his back, made him caper like Harlequin ; and the affair ended in a peal of laughter.

The last affair of honour, or receiving satisfaction, which I intend to intrude here, took place in the Bois de Boulogne, the usual shooting-place of the French gentlemen. In this case, an officer of the army and a wholesome apothecary of some repute were the principals. The affray originated, as usual, about a woman ; in fact, I hardly ever knew a duel take place in France, that had not its origin at either an *écarté-table* or a ball. This light and frivolous people think no more of shooting a man, and then laughing at the affair at a *café*, than a sailor

does of tipping a glass of grog. Their murderous way of fighting, which in a few words may be made clear, entitles the survivor to as fair a right to the gallows as the midnight murderer near Shooter's Hill. They generally stand about thirty paces and fire at discretion: in the event of the man first firing missing his antagonist, the other walks coolly up to him and blows his brains out. Sometimes they have an intermediate space of ten paces, over the barrier of which neither can pass; but supposing A to fire at the distance of twenty paces, he must then walk up to his barrier, whilst B, who has reserved his fire, does the same: and then, taking a steady unintimidated shot, shoots poor A without the slightest mercy. The apothecary, who well knew that death had plenty of nets out in the natural way to catch stragglers, thought it was no joke being shot by the soldier, who for a quarter of an hour had beat his breast with both hands, declaring himself to be a "brave homme," and to have the most sovereign contempt for any pill-manufacturer in his most Christian majesty's dominion. Bolus, however, had the choice of weapons; and when the parties met at the Bois de Boulogne, and the seconds began to measure the ground, Mr. Apothecary begged that he might address the other party, and make known with what weapons he intended to fight.

"Gentlemen," said he, clearing his voice after the usual manner of his fellow-countrymen, who have a most glorious disregard for Turkey carpets or polished grates, "I have been summoned to meet my antagonist for an alleged insult to his mistress; and it appears quite in vain that I declare I never intentionally wronged either her or him. Gentlemen, you come here with a carriage-load of swords and pistols, medical men and spectators—whilst I am here merely with my apprentice: as for swords, I never had one in my hand since I was born, and the devil himself never more piously abhorred a good man than I do a pistol. Spatulas and *mortars* are the nearest approach to those arms I ever made use of; and, therefore, I am by no means disposed to risk my life in such a very uneven rencontre: but I do not fear death more than my adversary, and upon that point I am willing to satisfy all par-

ties. As, if I use either of the above weapons my life must be sacrificed without a chance, I have brought with me a new species of hazard, which I trust will not be disagreeable to my adversary:"—here Bolus, making a proper pause, produced a small box.—"Gentlemen, in this box there are two pills: the one is poisoned, the other not; I will take one, and my adversary shall take the other; he shall have first choice, or I will have first choice; his second shall choose, or mine shall choose; we will have the pills put into our mouths by our opponent's seconds; after which we will wait upon the ground a quarter of an hour, and then retire homewards: before eight this evening, one will be fit for a habitation in Père La Chaise. Now, gentlemen, you have heard my proposition, and I await your answer."

The soldier declared he was bound to fight in any manner his adversary wished; and, notwithstanding the novel professional mode proposed, he would make no objection, and finished by opening his mouth as wide as an alligator's when catching flies, declaring himself perfectly ready to begin swallowing. As the weather was cold, and both anxious either to live or die, the seconds selected the obnoxious pill, and both instantly bolted the bitter potion. There they stood with riveted eyes upon one another, each endeavouring to trace the poison by his antagonist's countenance:—it was a fearful moment to the soldier: however often a military man may face death in the field, and however bravely he may bear himself, great is the difference between that and calmly awaiting the first shiver, as the venom diffuses itself through every vein. The apothecary appeared more convulsed than the soldier; and the doctors, who seemed to know the quick manner that the poison operated upon many of their patients, kept the most profound silence, and only varied their looks as either combatant changed colour, or became restless.

The quarter of an hour elapsed, and both parties retired home: but before they parted, the soldier expressed himself perfectly *satisfied* with the apothecary's apology; shook him by the hand, declared all his resentment buried in the grave he fancied he himself was soon to occupy; and, after

shaking hands, and kissing each other's dirty cheeks, they retired. The soldier threw himself upon his sofa, and there his hurried remembrance retraced his life; he suffered more than fifty deaths in the field of fame and path of honour: anxiously did he watch the hand of the clock, which clicked to him unusually slow; by six o'clock he had nearly worked himself into a fever; by seven he was half frantic; but when eight o'clock came and he lived, he leaped from his couch, put on his cloak, and sallied forth to witness the last dying groan of his former enemy. The apothecary had dined at a café, and was pleased beyond measure at the successful termination of the affair. On seeing his old antagonist, he congratulated him on his good fortune; asking at the same time if he did not think his mode of fighting preferable to any other. The soldier replied that he had undergone fifty thousand times more anxiety than he should have done otherwise; and that, rather than receive satisfaction in the apothecary's style, he would fight ten duels in the common way. "How do I know," said he, "that this cursed poison is not now working its course through me, and that by midnight I may be a corpse?"—"Ah!" said Bolus, "such a thing might have been but for my prudence and discretion. I have hindered all that, and you may rest in security; for, thinking how foolish it was to kill or be killed, for such a mistake as our quarrel was, and as you have confessed it to have been, I made the pills of bread, and not one grain of poison did I put therein." At this both parties laughed heartily; and, having undergone all the fear of death, felt quite satisfied to live on without further discord. A glass of wine settled the business, and both retired to rest.

We left Fernando de Noronha on the third day; and after various chasings, but not one prize, we returned to Portsmouth, and were again attached to the Channel Fleet. Again we had the Bay of Biscay for the field of our ambition; and here it was that we gave a wanderer on the ocean a specimen of naval tactics, not at all in unison with his feelings. By constant chasing we had got a very long way to the westward of our station, and, in company with the *Pyramus*, were returning to our ground, when we espied



at sun-set two large vessels to leeward, which bore all the marks of being enemies' ships. There is something about the rigging—the masts always rake more than ours—and the cut of the French sails, which to a seaman's eye is decisive of the country to which she belongs. Certainly on this occasion any man would have sworn to the strangers being French; and so impressed were we with the idea, that at sun-set we bore up in chase, and cleared for action. "Every man his bird," was of course the cry; we selected the headmost and largest ship, and left the *Pyramus* to finish the other. About ten o'clock we were close to our fancied foes; and without hailing or firing, or in any way alarming our antagonist, we ran our opponent on board on the starboard-side; our small bower-anchor tearing away his fore-channels; the fore-yard ripping his fore-topsail, and our main-yard performing the like service to the main-topsail: the boarders jumped on board, cutlass in hand, headed by the captain; who, swearing by Mars and St. George, that he would mince his enemies, flourished his Turkish sabre, and gallantly led the attack. About ten men only were found on the stranger's deck, and they very wisely took the liberty of retreating as quickly as possible below. In the middle of the confusion, the captain called to some one to seize the wheel; whereupon the commander of the stranger popped his head up the after-hatchway; and there, like a Methodist parson in a tub, kept vehemently exclaiming, "Oh! for shame, for shame! and an English frigate too!" To this Sir Peter responded, "By the god of war, if you had been a Frenchman, as I thought you were, I would have captured you in a moment!" We soon made amends for our hasty indiscretion, by giving him a certificate, that the damage was done *accidentally*. And in consequence the repairs were made good at the expense of the government: and thus it is, that John Bull, as usual, pays for all, even for the clumsiness of his own servants.

Shortly after this brilliant exploit the peace of Europe was restored; and we, with the rest of the squadron, repaired to the Garonne, preparatory to our sailing for America, to which station we were bound, in company with many transports, bearing some of the gallant fellows who

had fought under the Duke of Wellington in Spain. It was at Bordeaux that Sir Peter Parker bade adieu to those who formed the happiness of his life. It was a melancholy scene — so sad indeed, that a bystander remarked, that he never would return to England ; and said, “ I see, as it were, into futurity : poor Peter will never come back from America.”

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

OUR voyage across the Atlantic was short and pleasant, and we arrived in the Chesapeake amid that general war of conflagration and devastation, which half ruined the fertile shores of Virginia and Maryland. That this war, or rather the means by which it was carried on, was disgraceful to a civilized nation, no man doubts now. Because, forsooth, some savages, or perhaps men dressed one degree better than savages, commence a system of barbarity and desolation in the north ; we, pretending to be the most civilized nation on the face of the earth, must imitate their ravages in the south : because, in Canada, some huts and hovels were burnt, we in the Chesapeake were to burn and destroy some noble mansion, desolate some magnificent estate, and turn a land of plenty and prosperity into a bleak desert of starvation and misery.

On entering the Potomack, a large river which empties itself into the Chesapeake, the fertile shores of this beautiful country presented the sad effects of the war. On each side houses were burning with fearful rapidity, and when night came on, they resembled the signal-fires of the Indians, blazing in all the horrors of destruction. The next morning our marines accompanied the marines of the rest of the squadron in one of these expeditions. We were commanded by Sir George Cockburn in person, and with him, as an amateur, was the gallant General Ross, who was afterwards killed at Baltimore. Our destination was

up a river which runs at the back of St. George's Island — the object being to destroy a factory, which was not only the abode of innocent labour, but likewise the resort of some few militia-men guilty of the unnatural sin of protecting their own country. We started before daylight; and, having landed about five miles up the river, proceeded along a pretty fair road, flanked on each side by large woods, which led to the factory. General Ross directed the movements of our skirmishers, and instructed our sea-general in some of the movements requisite for the safety of a land army. On arriving within a few hundred yards of our destination, Sir Peter advanced with his division at a double-quick-time pace, and thus, at a full trot we entered the village where the factory was placed. Our approach had been long known; fire and fury followed our steps, and prudence had taught the necessity of watchfulness, or destruction and poverty were sure to be at hand. In such a war as this, few slept upon roses — and our path was shunned as religiously as men shun an infected city.

As the inhabitants had fled, with the exception of one or two old women, who disregarded us with all the vacancy of imbecility, we were blessed with a beautiful view of a "deserted village," far beyond even the imagination of Goldsmith. The houses were mere walls; the furniture was elsewhere: the population had flown, and a silence like that of the tomb prevailed. The crackling of the fagots, as the flames caught the factory, disturbed the repose: we most valiantly set fire to unprotected property, and, notwithstanding the imploring looks of the old women, we, like a parcel of savages as we were, danced round the wreck of ruin. It has been held by many very good and clever men, that, during war, private property should be respected: this is a very great mistake. Every man during war pays something towards the support of it: if this man is ruined, he ceases to contribute, and thus the exchequer is impoverished; ergo, the more you ruin in a war, the more you hurt the nation at large. But, sometimes, and the American war was a proof of it, the greatest inconsistencies existed: for instance, we never were allowed to

take cattle without paying for them. A bullock was estimated at five dollars, although it was worth twenty; and sheep had the high price of one dollar attached to them, they being in reality worth six at least. Yet did we burn the house of the man to whom the stock belonged. But supposing, and I have seen it a hundred times, that the farmer refused the money for his stock; why, then we drove sheep, bullocks, and geese away, and left the money for the good man to take afterwards — as quakers leave their taxes, which they have foresworn not to pay. I should like to have explained why we, sharks as we were, swallowed up every little schooner laden with fruit, or with ducks, &c., going to market; and why we were made to pay for the very same articles if we found them on shore. The hue and cry always was — “Respect private property;” “pay for what you take, but take care to take all you can:” and under this wholesome legislation we burnt and destroyed right and left. If by any stretch of argument we could establish the owner of a house, cottage, hut, &c., to be a militia-man, that house we burnt, because we found arms therein; that is to say, we found a duck-gun, or a rifle. It so happens that in America every man must belong to the militia; and, consequently, every man’s house was food for a bonfire. And so well did we act up to the very spirit of our orders, that if the Americans who bounded the shores of Virginia and Maryland do not entail upon their posterities the deepest hatred and the loudest curses upon England and her marauders, why, they must possess more Christian charity than I give them credit for, and be much better calculated for the kingdom of Heaven than for sojourners on this little mountain of mud. The ruin, the desolation, the heartless misery, that we left them to brood over, will for ever make the citizens of the United States, in spite of the relationship of the countries, hate us with that hatred which no words can allay, or time eradicate.

On our return from the factory, General Ross re-embarked — whilst a small party, under a distinguished leader, proceeded to surround a house situated near the beach immediately behind St. George’s Island. It was about

nine o'clock in the evening ; the sun had long set, the moon threw a pale light over the landscape, and all nature seemed hushed in repose — save when the echo repeated the splash of oars, or distant hum of men ; or when the ripple of a wave broke on the shore, and the chirping cricket made its feeble noise. Around some poplar trees which flanked an avenue terminating with the dwelling-house, the ground was cultivated with much care, indicating the watchful eye of a good farmer. The plantations were in better order than usual, and the whole establishment conveyed the idea of rural content and peaceable inhabitants.

Little did the inmates dream, at the moment they sat down to their evening's repast, that the destroyer was at hand, or that their house was surrounded by armed men. Our advance was so cautious, that even suspicion might have been lulled into a fatal repose. The door stood open, and two officers besides myself entered most unceremoniously — intruding upon the privacy of three young ladies sitting quietly round a tea-table, occupying themselves with their work, and apparently expecting a visit from some persons likely to be much more welcome than the present company. A hasty scream of terror and astonishment saluted us on our entrance. We were very used to these womanish expressions of terror ; for during the time any house was consuming, the former inhabitants would give vent to their feelings in the natural way, reserving their curses until we were out of sight. Our leader was naturally a very austere man ; but Sir Peter Parker, who was the handsomest man in the navy, wore always a winning smile and a cheerful demeanour. The ladies instantly made a tender appeal to the latter, but he remained silent : he was a good officer, and had begun to command, after he had learnt to obey. Our chief began the conversation.

“ Pray, ladies, where is your father ? ”

“ He is out,” replied the elder girl, “ and we do not expect him home for some time.”

The very way this answer was expressed, convinced us that the father was rather too near to be pleasant, for either him or his family.

“ He is a colonel of militia ? ” continued the intruder.

“ Yes,” was the reply ; “ he does belong to the militia.”

“ And you have arms in the house belonging to other militia-men ? ” This was strenuously denied.

“ He, however,” continued the leader, “ *did* provide arms for some of his corps ? ” There seemed a slight acquiescence on the part of the ladies, which was followed by these words, “ I am sorry to be guilty of any act which tends to frighten females, but I must do my duty. Your father has mainly assisted in arming the militia ; he is himself a colonel, and consequently an enemy of some rank and power. In ten minutes’ time I shall set fire to this house ; therefore use that period in removing your most valuable effects, which shall not be touched by my men. At the expiration of that time I shall give orders to burn the premises.”

Any man, who knew the character of our commanding officer, would have known that he never deviated from his word, and consequently would have availed himself of the limited time, and packed up for a change of residence. Not so the young ladies ; they endeavoured, by all the arts of their sex, to turn us from our resolution. Mark Antony lost the world for a tear : our American friends lost their valuable effects by trying the tender appeal on a sailor’s heart ; they threw themselves on their knees, begged, implored, urged, and once *commanded* us to depart — to respect their forlorn, unprotected situation, and to leave them to their home, their wretchedness, and their tears : “ *We*,” they continued, “ never assisted in the war, excepting to succour the wounded, and supply the distressed ; we never urged our father to arm the militia-men ; we are, in fact, poor and forlorn females : do not turn us out in the dead of night, to seek another asylum ; consider we are women ; consider our sex, and reserve your decree until to-morrow.”

However unfeeling it may appear, yet I am bound to make the remark, that highway robbers or midnight plunderers never wait for *to-morrow* : “ *carpe diem* ” is their motto. The poor little ladies never considered that papa and the militia might stop our holiday’s bonfire, if we

waited for what never arrives — “to-morrow.” Five minutes had elapsed; and to look on all countenances, and to see the devastating determination which existed, might have damped the strongest hope: but ladies are very persevering. The youngest, a girl of about sixteen, and lovely beyond her sex’s loveliness — at least in these parts — threw herself on her knees, and clasping Sir Peter Parker, begged him to interfere in their behalf. He must have been something more than a man to have withstood this, without any manifestation of concern, or without flinching. The tears started in his eyes in a moment, and this confession of weakness was hailed as a happy omen. I had been looking through a thick mist the whole time; but my tears are near the surface, and I do not want my heart probed to produce them. But there stood the chief — his countenance unchanged and unchangeable — his watch on the table, and his eyes fixed upon it. One girl had seized his left arm, which she pressed with her open hands; another watched every feature of his countenance; and the third was kneeling — a kind of supplicating angel, who soon caused the feelings of the sailor to overcome his duty. Sir Peter began a stammering sentence, which the chief soon cut short with a glance of his quick eye. The time was expired; the watch replaced in the fob; and I was desired to order the men to bring the fire-balls.\*

Never shall I forget the despair of that moment. Poor Sir Peter wept like a child, whilst the girl clung to his knees, and impeded his retreat; the chief walked out with his usual haughty stride, followed by the two eldest girls, who again and again vainly implored him to countermand the order. Sir Peter was scarcely clear of the threshold, when the flames of the house threw a vivid light over the before still darkness. We retreated from the scene of ruin, leaving the three daughters gazing at the work of desolation, which made the innocent houseless, and the affluent beggars. It is needless inquiring about feelings, or such-like poetical terms: all men feel, some more intensely than others — but duty and feeling must often be at variance — and the man who sacrifices the former at the

\* These balls were a collection of rope-yarns covered with pitch.

suggestion of the latter, may make a very good man, but a very bad officer. It is possible to blend the two together. It is said — “who handsomely denies, half grants the suit:” on the above occasion, no man will say that the ladies were not handsomely denied, but the suit was by no means granted.

By the light of that house we embarked, and returned on board. It was a scene which impressed itself upon my heart, and which my memory and my hand unwillingly recall and publish.

We were despatched from the squadron in order to draw the attention of the American troops from Baltimore, whilst our army advanced upon Washington: but they scarcely ventured an opposition, and, headed by the President, took to their heels from our charge at Bladensburg\*, and ran, as some say, mostly to Baltimore; whilst others, thinking the enemy at hand, made the best of their way to Philadelphia; at least, so the malicious people about Annapolis used to aver.

Our duty consisted in an eternal annoyance of the enemy, and therefore night and day we were employed in offensive operations. We followed the laudable example set us in the Potomack, and from constant practice, were most consummately skilled in the art of house-burning. It is quite a mistake to set fire to a house to windward; it should always be fired the leeward side; the air becoming rarefied by the heat, the wind rushes round the corners, and blows the flame against the house; whereas, on the weather side, the wind blows the flames round the angles, one half of their force is lost, and consequently time is consumed as well as the house. My readers may rely upon this interesting information being correct, for we tried the effect on two houses at the same time; and it was admitted, even by the owners, who had been guilty of the gross inconsistency and folly of defending their native land, that “the firing to leeward” was equally as efficacious, and doubly as expeditious. Let us hope this dis-

\* In Mrs. Trollope's *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, she has introduced the American account of the taking of Washington, which almost corroborates the opinions of the people of Annapolis.



graceful, savage mode of warfare will never again be countenanced by civilized nations. It will be a blot on our escutcheons as long as the arms of England exist.

There are times in a man's life, when his mind forebodes approaching dangers, and prophesies events: these hints are usually slighted, until the mischief has been accomplished; and then Conscience steps in, and rapping at the door of Memory, says, "I told you so; why did you not listen to the warning?" The want of attention to these little twitches of futurity are

A kind of income-tax laid on by fate:

and wise would be the man who would listen to the suggestion.

On the morning of the day on which the following event occurred, we had not only burnt but robbed a house, from the parLOUR of which we had filched a mahogany table, intending it to supersede our old oaken dockyard affair; which being bundled down in the carpenter's store-room, we installed our ill-gotten furniture in its place. As this genteel apparatus was none the better for long neglect on shore, and the careless manner in which it had been handled in shipping it, I, in the dignified capacity of caterer of the mess, to which high situation I had been lately nominated by about as riotous a set of boys as ever existed in His Majesty's service, proposed that we should take it by turns to polish the table, in order to render it a proper bright appendage to our berth. Poor Sands, who was seated in the corner, looking wofully wretched, refused to assist; alleging as a reason, that he felt perfectly convinced he should never eat off the table, as that night something had forewarned him that he was to be killed. How the unwelcome news was communicated he knew not, but certain he was that the present was his last day — that the night would close his earthly career. In vain I attempted to rally him from the strange melancholy which had overtaken him; he sat in a state of almost perfect stupefaction. I ordered some supper by way of breaking the charm; but he either would not or could not eat; he lounged over his writing-desk, apparently without

thought, or without employment. Suddenly he seemed to recollect himself, and, opening his desk, began to distribute to his oldest friends some trifling remembrance of him : he was much beloved. To me he gave a silver knife ; and, with a countenance denoting his apprehension, said, “ I have nothing to send home ; but my death will be severely felt there.”

We, not having exactly the same awful feelings as our messmates, burst into a fit of laughter ; and I, by way of a joke, wrote his epitaph : this, however, neither excited the resentment nor the spleen of poor Sands. Up to this minute he was the only midshipman destined to remain on board, the rest being appointed to the different boats, and different divisions of small-arm men, to be ready for service at nine o'clock. As it was requisite to avoid anything like suspicion in the eyes of our enemies — the frigate being at anchor within pistol-shot of the shore — instead of using the boatswain's whistle to call the boats away\*, the order was merely whispered along the decks. Young Martin (who afterwards died in the command of the *Nautilus*) being asleep, and not being aroused by the slight bustle, was absent when his boat was manned ; and Sands, who had officiated in preparing the boats, was placed in her by the order of the first lieutenant, and thus was he thrust in the way of fate quite unprepared—and certainly gave death a fairer opportunity of seizing his prey.

That morning, Sir Peter Parker, in leaning over the taffrail, to make some remarks upon the rigging at the mizen-top-mast-head, lost his gold-lace cocked-hat overboard. He said, very thoughtfully, and in a very unusual manner, “ My head will follow this evening.” We had an American, captain of a schooner we had captured, on board, and he was kind enough to enact prophet on the same subject, and to the same effect. From that moment Sir Peter was more thoughtful and reserved : he prepared his will with the purser ; he destroyed his letters ; he made several allusions concerning his wife and family ; in short, spoke like a man who had some apprehension of impending

\* In general we used a Chinese gong for this service, and that made noise enough to be heard about six miles off.

ing fate. I dined alone with him on that day. was unusually reserved and dull ; a kind of melancholy settled upon his countenance, and every feature indicated some secret foreboding, awfully present to his imagination. When events have happened, we recall these apparent trifles ; and then we trace what before we feared to avow.

Nine o'clock came : the boats, as before mentioned, were manned ; and I, as aid-de-camp, took my usual seat in the captain's gig. The boats left the ship at the same moment ; and, with muffled oars and breathless silence, we approached the landing-place, when the gig's keel grated on the sand, and the boat stopped. I was surprised to find Sir Peter remain motionless on his seat. On every other occasion he had been always first to board, or first to land ; but on the night of the 1st of August, 1814, he was lost in thought, and never attempted to move. Knowing his usual ambition to be first in all danger, I was rather slack in asking, what I was ultimately obliged to do — “if I should precede him ?” This instantly aroused him, and he jumped from his seat ; but, instead of landing by the gang-board, he stepped overboard alongside, and walked to the beach in the water. The preparations of forming the men, selecting the advance-guard, and giving other necessary orders, diverted Sir Peter from his train of melancholy, and he appeared as animated, and flushed with as much hope and confidence, as on any other occasion.

Our army, for so I must designate it, consisted of the marines, and about one hundred seamen : all of the latter having been previously practised, and taught to march and counter-march, they formed in pretty good style, and we commenced operations in a very satisfactory manner. The advance-guard, under the command of one of the midshipmen, had marched about a quarter of a mile, when they discovered a mounted piquet of the American forces, under a large tree, and apparently all asleep on their horses. This the midshipman thought too good an opportunity to be lost, for, according to our creed, “all is fair in war-time ;” and, sleeping or waking, an American was an enemy. Our guard, with cautious step, advanced, as near as prudence dictated, to the slumbering foe, and then, taking a deliberate

aim, fired. Although, when they took the sleepy advantage of the guard, they were not ten paces distant from them, they contrived to miss horse, riders, and all. The Americans, startled into activity by the unwelcome salute, returned the fire with equal precipitation and bad aim; after which they galloped off into a wood in the vicinity. Here they fired a single pistol: it was answered by one at some distance; and that again was answered at the camp by a field-piece. This last was far off, for the sound was not of that sharp kind which is always observed when the firing is close.

It was now past all doubt that we were discovered, and a prudent man would have instantly retired. It was the height of madness to advance into the interior of a country we knew nothing about, led by a black man, whose sincerity in our cause was very questionable, and who might have been paid to run away from his owner, and to lead us into the snare evidently prepared for us. The road which led to our destination was flanked on our right by a wood, and on the left by an open field. It now became a question of much importance if we should continue with the wood so near, or if it would be more prudent to take the field. It was a very fine, clear, moonshiny night, and our marines had all bright muskets: in short, we had a host of unforeseen events to fight against, and only one wise mode of proceeding — which was, to have retreated. Fate hurried us on to destruction; for, after a council of war, which road to pursue, we took the worst, of course, and advanced along the open ground, perceptible to our enemies from the above-mentioned reasons; whilst they, concealed by the obscurity of the wood, remained entirely hidden from our sight. Our ill-fated march was arrested by the approach of a single horseman, who, having arrived close to our men, began a nasal-tone speech after the following manner: —

“Well now, that’s odd enough! I calculate I have made a mistake; for I guess you be the Britishers.”

“Who are you?” asked Sir Peter Parker.

“Why, I expect I am nobody at all on the face of God’s earth.”

He was a man about eighteen stone, and a colonel of the

militia into the bargain : consequently he was made a prisoner, dismounted, and placed under the guardianship of one of the gunner's crew, and ultimately met a very cruel death, which will be related in its proper place. Here again was a warning to us. This fat colonel had come two miles, merely because *all the militia* had been called out, as the English had landed and seemed resolved upon some inland excursion :

O hapless mortals ever blind to fate, &c.

Sir Peter mounted the colonel's Rosinante, and, turning round to his *army*, he pointed his sword, and gave the word, " Battalion, advance ! "

Having some orders to deliver to the different officers, I passed in the rear, and on my return saw poor Sands : he expressed himself more and more satisfied that his end was approaching, and seemed only vexed at the idea of marching a measured step to his inevitable execution. I left him, to resume my proper station, watchful as to his men, but irrecoverably lost as to moral courage. After passing through a small village, we came to some hurdles, where Sir Peter dismounted ; and the guide, prefacing that the enemy were within a few yards of us, asked if we preferred being led through the woods, and thus coming on the rear of the enemy's camp, or passing through a narrow defile and facing the foe. Even now, had we been blessed with one single ray of common reason, we should have retreated ; but no, relentless fate still interfered. Here we had the certainty that our enemies were prepared ; that they had availed themselves of a good position ; were five times more numerous ; had the advantage of local knowledge ; had field-pieces, cavalry, and riflemen ; — whilst we had not more than eighty men armed with muskets, and some, as we had seen, not very expert with them, the rest being provided with boarding-pikes and cutlasses. We had four men who formed a rocket brigade : but the man who carried the staffs was the first killed ; therefore these offensive articles were rendered useless — for rockets won't fly without tails any more than kites.

It being decided to advance in face of the enemy, the

word "March!" was heard along our file, and we proceeded to the field of action. Had the cavalry attacked us as we crossed the hurdles, our defeat would have been easy and our fate inevitable. We now entered the defile, broad enough for five men to march abreast; and had progressed to about the mid distance, when the enemy's riflemen, who flanked the road, and were concealed behind the trees within four paces of us, opened their fire, which was rapid, well-directed, and consequently destructive. The order to charge reverberated through the wood, and was heard above the firing. We suddenly emerged into an open field, divided by a road, and perfectly surrounded by a thick wood. The road led up a gentle ascent, on the summit of which the enemy had planted five field-pieces directed down the road, and through the defile we had passed: these guns formed the centre of the American forces, and they had about five hundred men, equally divided on the flanks; the woods sheltered some riflemen, and the cavalry were in the rear of the line: such was the disposition of their men—which information was given the next day.

As the fire was too hot, and much too fatally directed to allow us to continue our charge along the road, up to the very muzzle of the artillery, the marines, under their respective officers, and accompanied by Sir Peter Parker and Lieutenant Pearce, struck off to the right, whilst the blue-jackets, under Lieutenant Crease, advanced on the left side of the field. As the marines fired rapidly, the whole force of the enemy was drawn to oppose us; and we advanced at double-quick time, in the hopes of closing with our foes and finishing the fight; but they cautiously retreated as we advanced towards the wood in the rear; at last they made a halt, and we distinctly heard one of the officers telling his men to stand firm against the attack "of the British lions, as they called themselves." Pocock, a midshipman who never felt any indication of fear since the day of his birth, rushed in the front of our rank, and challenged the officer, to meet him single-handed—not indeed in very courteous language, for he d——d him for a chattering monkey, who would be the first to run away.

Up to this moment, Sir Peter Parker had cheered on the

marines with his usual determined courage ; his Turkish sabre sparkled in the moonlight as he waved it over his head, and his continual cry of "Forward ! Forward !" resounded amidst the firing ; but now his voice failed, and he fell in my arms. The whole animation of the party died when he drooped. The Americans fortunately had begun another retreat ; and our ceasing fire only led them to believe that we were following the quicker. Sir Peter's only words were these : "I fear they have done for me ; Pearce, you had better retreat, for the boats are a long way off." In vain we asked where he was wounded ; for he was unable to speak, and had fainted. On lifting him on the marines' shoulders (six of whom carried him off the field), Pocock, who had assisted, and who had placed his hands under the thighs of the captain, remarked that the dew was very heavy, for the captain was wet through ; but on holding his hands to the moonlight, he discovered them dyed in blood.

It was instantly proposed to strip Sir Peter on the spot — and had this been done, he might perhaps have been saved ; but we were in no situation to delay operations — a hasty retreat was determined, and we instantly began to retrace our steps. The wound was occasioned by a buck-shot, which had cut the femoral artery, and poor Sir Peter was bleeding to death. The surgeon's assistant had been left, after the first volley, to attend the wounded, and he had plenty to do. Had a pocket-handkerchief and a ram-rod been substituted for a tourniquet, the captain's valuable life might have been saved ; but no, we had little time for thought or reason, and we had manifested so perfect a disregard to that goddess throughout the whole affair, that it was by no means wonderful that she then neglected us. In the meantime we began our retreat, having discontinued our fire.

The operations of the other party had been various ; they had charged up the left side of the field, and had possession of a field-piece, which was again retaken by the Americans. Our blue-jackets then edged away through the wood, ultimately making good their retreat to the boats. No sooner had we recrossed the hurdles before mentioned, than the

sound of cavalry was heard on our left, clattering along the road. Our force at that moment amounted to only sixteen men, and two marine officers, both of whom were wounded. Pocock had not escaped; while in the act of congratulating himself on his almost miraculous escape, a shot struck him on *the seat of honour*; and Pearce and myself remained the only two officers of our division untouched. The corn through which we retreated was as high as our shoulders; and as the infantry followed our retreat, we lay down and allowed them to pass. They edged away to the right, keeping up a random fire, ultimately entering the wood through which our blue-jackets had retreated. We were very glad to get rid of them. Again we shouldered our dead captain, and proceeded onwards.

As the cavalry had broken through the hurdles, and were coming in our direction, we again called a halt until they were passed, when we again retreated, concealing the muskets, and keeping as near the hurdles as prudence dictated. The cavalry, having skirted the field on the far side, came over to examine the part in which we were retreating; we instantly crossed the hurdles, and pointed our bayonets through the apertures. On they came valiantly enough when they perceived their prey—and our sixteen heroes stood as quietly as if the chances were equal: they allowed the troopers to advance within six yards, when they gave a cheer, and poured in a well-directed volley. The Independent Light Horse Virginia Volunteers, and their horses, by no means relished this salute; their steeds, unaccustomed to such close work, stopped short, and turned tail; some of the riders were thrown, some killed, and all routed: they retired and left us to our painful retreat.

We had not a moment to lose: we again placed our dead captain on the shoulders of the marines, and, under the directions of Pearce, who was a clever, intelligent, brave, and determined man, we recrossed the hurdles and continued our march. Every five minutes we had to relieve the men who carried the captain: not a murmur was heard; every one cheerfully took his turn; confidence was kept alive from the known bravery of each man, most of whom



had been in a score of actions together. Banyan, the marine officer, was shot through both thighs ; and yet this hardy veteran and excellent man contrived to walk the whole distance, certainly three miles, with merely the assistance of placing his hands on two of the marines' shoulders. In spite of the stiffness occasioned by his wounds, the poignant pain, and the knowledge of the long distance before him, he gave his orders coolly and distinctly ; never appeared the least fearful of our situation, and cheered the men by his example and his voice. Had merit been rewarded, as it scarcely ever is where the brave are destitute of friends, Banyan ought to have had a memorial of that night affixed to his breast—the Star of the Valiant—the object of every soldier's ambition.

We arrived at the village through which we had passed in our advance. The women, fearful we might wreak our vengeance upon them, stood crying at their doors ; no one thought of them or of revenge. The well was our object ; and no dogs after a long run ever approached the running stream with half our eagerness. In vain it was whispered that the spring might be poisoned—a circumstance we knew to be far from improbable : nature was above all apprehension, and I was the first to place my mouth to the bucket. Talk of nectar ! there is no nectar like pure water tasted under severe sufferings from thirst and fatigue. We placed Sir Peter on the stone of the well, and, after having uselessly chafed his temples, and refreshed ourselves, we again proceeded. I must confess, that, when we were about to leave the village, I proposed to leave all that remained of Sir Peter Parker behind. I conceived it perfect folly to risk our lives for no possible good : he was dead beyond all doubt, and we only ran the risk of losing our own lives by being retarded in our retreat if we carried the corpse. A shout of displeasure at the proposition arose from the men ; they swore he never should be left to be buried by strangers, and resumed their labours with a cheerfulness and alacrity quite marvellous.

After an hour's retreat, we arrived at the spot where we had disembarked. Instinctively we walked into the water—why, God only knows ; but so it was, every man of us

took to our element: — to our extreme mortification, the boats were not to be found. Pearce questioned me on the subject: this was the only time the captain had omitted to make me acquainted with any change, and I was consequently unable to give any satisfactory reply; we therefore resumed our march along the shore towards the frigate. The beach terminated by a high bank, over the summit of which we perceived numerous heads. We were hailed, and gave the answer “Brook Street;” the countersign was “forty-four.” This being answered, we were gratified to find ourselves once more under the protection of friends; for at that moment, amongst sixteen marines, we had only three cartridges left. We now laid Sir Peter on a log of wood, and the assistant-surgeon, Mr. Miller, declared him perfectly dead—which I would have sworn to about three hours previous to this declaration. The boats soon came — we embarked; and the sorrow of the crew, when they heard the loss they had sustained, baffles my power to paint.

No sooner had we embarked, and were on the point of committing ourselves to our hammocks, than the drum beat to quarters. We were instantly at our posts, and found that the gun-boats from Baltimore had come to amuse us. One shot dispersed them, and we retired. I was so dead beat that I turned in “all standing,” as the sailors say; that is, I did not undress myself.

Poor Sands! he had been truly forewarned; one of the first shots from the artillery struck him just above the heart: he sprang into the air, and fell down a corpse!

The American colonel met his fate in the following shameful manner: when the first volley took place, the gunner's mate, to whose charge the prisoner had been consigned, led him away from the firing, and stood by him with a pistol in his hand: he had not been long in that position, before a troop of horse came in full trot in their direction. The gunner's-mate, turning to his prisoner, said, “I'm sorry, sir, to do it, but I must do it, you know.” — “Do what?” replied the prisoner. “Why, shoot you, to be sure; did not you hear the captain desire me not to let you escape?” — “Why, now, I expect,” said

the American, "you would not shoot me in cool blood; for I calculate you're a man, although you are a Britisher, I guess."—"Here they come," said Jack, and shot the colonel through the head; the leading dragoon at that moment cleaving him through the shoulder, and leaving him like a fowl with the wing nearly severed from the trunk.

Thus ended the affair of the 1st of August—it was foolishly proposed, hastily planned, and madly executed: no good could come of it, because our firing and fighting for weeks would not have drawn the troops from Baltimore. They must either have embarked, and passed the frigate, or they must have marched at least fifty miles before they could have crossed the river. It was reported that owing to the confined situation in which the *Menelaus* was placed, this attack was necessary to extricate her: this was positively untrue; for had that been the case, the Americans of course would have followed up the advantage—for, with the exception of some few militia-men who had been food for powder, they were exactly in the same position as before the engagement; consequently, if their idea had been to toss up a battery on our quarter, they had their five field-pieces still left, the wood to shelter them, and men to complete the work. The fact is, we had no business trotting over ploughed ground, and high grass, to get shot like crows in a corn-field; it was a headstrong, foolish business, which terminated in a very considerable loss of life—little honour—and no prize-money. The loss of Sir Peter Parker alone counterbalanced any advantage we might have reaped over a parcel of fat militia-men; and, had it not been for Pearce's\* coolness and discretion, his body would never have been in St. Margaret's church, Westminster; and Lord Byron's beautiful epitaph would have remained in his lordship's works, instead of on the marble monument built by the desire and at the expense of the officers and ship's company of the *Menelaus*, who

\* This excellent young man, who united all the softness of our nature with the sterner and more manly qualities, fell a victim to the climate of Africa; he accompanied Clapperton in his attempt to reach Timbuctoo. I have never met a man in the navy who knew Pearce, who did not speak of him in the warmest manner, as a friend, a gentleman, and an officer;—his loss was a loss to the navy of Great Britain.

were proud of being commanded by so daring and so good an officer.

On the morning of the 2nd of August, we sent on shore a flag of truce. The Americans were quite aware they had killed the captain; for they produced one of his shoes, in which his name was written at full length—adding, as they exhibited it, “We guess that your captain was not a man to run away without his shoes.” They estimated our force at four hundred men; and being told that the whole firing on our side was maintained by forty men at the most, one of the Americans paid us the Irish compliment of saying, “Then I expect they must *have fired with double-barrelled muskets.*”

The Menelaus shortly afterwards joined the admiral, and Captain Dix was appointed to her. The body of our late commander was intrusted to the care of Captain Palmer of the Hebrus, to be conveyed to Bermuda for interment; it was afterwards disinterred and conveyed to St. Margaret's: the ship's company made a vigorous effort to bury their own captain, and the admiral came on board to reason with them on the absurdity. He then endeavoured to persuade them to hoist the body out immediately: this they respectfully refused, declaring he should not be hoisted out like a bale of smuggled goods by moonlight; but they promised at daylight to do as the admiral desired. It was gratifying, even in the opposition of discipline, to see so much feeling manifested; and the admiral displayed a greater knowledge of human nature by the mode he took to insure obedience to his commands, than if he had abused them for their disobedience, or appeared annoyed by their firmness. At day-dawn every man mustered at divisions without being ordered, cleanly dressed, and many with black round their arms, as a substitute for mourning. The band played the 104th Psalm; the marines preceded the corpse, which was borne round the quarter-deck and fore-castle, and ultimately hoisted over the larboard side. As the coffin slowly descended, a low but distinct sound of “God bless him!” fell upon the ear; the seamen, uncovered, bowed down their heads, and hid their rugged faces in their hats; there was an awful solemnity in the

scene—for there was not a dry eye in the ship ; and men who feared not to brave the fiercest fight, showed all the genuine excellence of the sailor, which unites with bravery a tear for departed worth—a feeling as intense as it is sincere.

Thus died Sir Peter Parker :—he was a brave, generous, and excellent man ; rigid in discipline, firm of purpose, resolute in action ; and notwithstanding his severity, he must have had some excellent qualifications, when the seamen he had severely punished regretted his loss, and wept like children over his coffin. I could give thousands of anecdotes of this man, which the excitement of the times in which he lived prevented from being appreciated. The story of poor Pitt, a midshipman of the *Menelaus*, who died of water on the brain, would alone immortalize Sir Peter ; had Pitt been his own son, he could not have manifested greater feeling or affection. The sick were his peculiar care ; and if he made a man do his duty when in health, he took care that when indisposed he was properly attended and nourished. He will live as long as the English language exists : Lord Byron's beautiful epitaph must survive the ephemeral productions of the day, and will hand to posterity the name of Parker.

When he fell, the country lost a brave officer, the navy an ornament, and I a friend.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

THE attack on Baltimore, the death of the ever-lamented General Ross, our retreat, and perhaps our bungling, have been commented upon over and over again ; and the public, and the officers who assisted at the business, must be heartily tired of hearing of a failure, arising from that which I am not at all inclined to mention. I shall jump over our capture of the town of Tappahanock, situated up the Rappahanock\*, by the boats of the squadron, under

\* I am not sure of the orthography being correct.

the command of Captain Barry, of the *Dragon* — the plunder of the place — and the ludicrous letters found in the post-office — to the conclusion of the war, which was made known to us by a colonel of the army from Norfolk, off which port we lay at anchor, blockading an American frigate. As I have bored the reader with real attacks on men and ships, I think it right to give a very short sketch of a land fight — against neither landmen nor soldiers, but against something equally formidable — because,

Where no honour's to be gain'd,  
'Tis thrown away in being maintain'd.

It was at the plunder of the town of Tappahanock, where, as usual, the cry of "Respect private property" had particularly been impressed by a certain tall captain, whose gig went off to the tender actually laden with boots and shoes. We first commenced an attack on the town — and then plundered it, because the inhabitants had not remained to be shot, or to trust to our honour. The marines advanced inland, the boats of the squadron remaining near the shore ready to re-embark them, covered by the heavier boats, which carried carronades. We were particularly desired not to land; but seeing boots and shoes walking into a captain's gig, — half a butcher's shop in another, the cockswain of a third with two geese dangling to his hands — we became hungry from fancy, and impatient under our restrictions; and therefore edged near the beach, and landed in the vicinity of a large house which belonged to one Doctor Bolingbroke. In about five minutes the house was turned out of the windows, and every man carried off some of the property. A large staircase clock was clapped upon a few geese at the bottom of the boat to keep them quiet; then came a bundle of books and some cabbages, a feather-bed, and a small cask of peach brandy. The boat was soon deeply laden, and we all re-embarked, like good boys, with the exception of young Martin, who had strayed a little away.

We had scarcely shoved off to our station, before Mr. Martin appeared, cutlass in hand, running at an uncommon pace, closely pursued by a large pig, which kept capering

at his heels, with its back rounded, bristling and grunting like a hog in a high wind. Our gallant messmate having seen the delinquent grubbing up some cabbages, thought he would be revenged upon the pig for its violation of all "respect of private property," and prepared to kill and capture the animal. It appears the enemy allowed Martin to get within reach, for it was made sensible of this by receiving a pretty sharp thrust from a cutlass; whereupon, like Hudibras's horse, —

Which, straight, in wrath did then resent  
The wrongs done to his fundament —

it turned short round, and ventured to taste a part of the midshipman's legs. This untoward event disheartened the assaulter, who seemed now to be in the situation he had destined for his enemy, saving the roasting. A speedy flight was begun; but finding the pig gain upon him in his retreat, the gallant young hero occasionally turned and struck his pursuer over the head with the aforesaid cutlass. Mr. Hog, by no means intimidated, continued his attack — and had he been one inch further in advance, the calf of the midshipman's leg would have been missing. It became anything else but a joke; and some of the sailors, who saw their favourite likely to be beaten and discomfited by the pig, stepped on shore, and four hours afterwards were busily employed in devouring the enemy.

It is requisite in this world to know a little of every thing. How many men do we daily meet, who, having the reputation of men of consummate genius, are in reality mere children in the theatre of existence; and, driven once from their accustomed line, become little better than stalking specimens of imbecility! It is your hard-working rugged man, who, accustomed from his cradle to act for himself, and having undergone all the hardships of life, knows by experience how to remedy an evil. In this respect the common Russian peasant is infinitely superior to any of our "march-of-intellect" mechanics; and a sailor, who, Heaven knows, does not repose upon downy couches, or who seldom sleeps to any other music but the tramp of the officer over his head, profits by every disaster, and learns from painful experience the necessity of atten-

tion and activity through life. I had been desired to purchase some fresh provisions for our mess at Savannah, and for that purpose accompanied the first-lieutenant in the barge, the ship being at that time anchored off the mouth of the river, about twenty-six miles, more or less, from the town. It happened that the first-lieutenant required more money than he and the purser had brought, to pay for the meat purchased for the ship's company, and I was called upon to advance the requisite sum. I had then twenty-three dollars left, and was in anxious search after turkeys and other good things for my hungry messmates. I was forced to accede to the request, because a request from a first-lieutenant is first-cousin to a positive command; and thus I was divested of twenty dollars, leaving me only three, and which three I then did not actually want.

During the altercation which invariably ensues between purchaser and vender,—one generally loth to part with and the other avaricious to touch the money,—one of the men started from the boat, and made free to leave his Majesty's service without permission. The first-lieutenant and myself went in pursuit, and followed the deserter into a store (all shops in America are called stores); but he had been concealed by the American, who "declared to God, and hoped to be burnt alive, if he knew anything of the unfortunate man, who, he made free to expect, was as much a slave as any nigger in a rice plantation."\* A whole crowd of the freeborn Americans followed us into the store, and hooted and howled at us as if we were not in the common execution of our duty. I was cut short in my harangue, which I had begun (and which I intended to have continued, on the ground that if an apprentice had taken shelter on board the *Menelaus*, the freemen would have been clamorous had he been withheld), by the first-lieutenant, who, mustering up courage, swore he would search the house.

\* When a part of this chapter appeared in the "Metropolitan Magazine," I was most furiously attacked by an anonymous correspondent in the "Tatler," who, after lavishing a plentiful abuse, finished by declaring that, in my pretended compliments to the Americans, I, in point of fact, was only abusing them. I have experienced too much hospitality from our transatlantic friends to abuse them; and I venture to affirm that the charge is false.



No one can well fancy the manifested displeasure which followed this declaration. "Search my house!" said Jonathan, "I calculate you'll do no such thing: I guess you had much better leave that alone, or I expect you will get better than what you bring." This beautiful speech being followed by, "Why, I declare to God, these Britishers think to treat us like niggers!"—we were ejected by the mob, and got cuffed for the intrusion; at least I know I was. I followed the first-lieutenant to the boat, and was on the point of embarkation, when he turned and said, "Mr. F., stay on shore, and endeavour to find M'Donald. You must consult the authorities; and take care not to give offence. A boat will be here to-morrow, and you can return in her to the ship."

With sorrowful eyes I watched the boat until she turned the first projecting land. I then began to think what course to pursue. As for attempting to seize M'Donald if I found him, I knew would only be to court a repetition of abuse and blows, already too bountifully lavished. The mob of Jonathans seemed to look at me with consummate contempt; and I could easily discern that I was in a hornet's nest, and likely to be pretty severely stung if I attempted offensive measures. One by one, the inquisitive strangers retired to their avocations; and, about half an hour after I lost sight of the boat, I was alone, in the same position, with eyes riveted on the point of land which excluded my companions from my view. The wind, which had been fresh in the morning, soon blustered into a gale; the sand of the town, which is disagreeably plentiful, rendered the atmosphere about as thick as a London fog in November; the little waves of the river splashed against the shore; cloud succeeded cloud, and by six o'clock it blew hard enough, to use a seaman's expression, to blow the devil's horns off his head. I sneaked to an inn, and bargained for my supper, bed, and breakfast, for one dollar. Right well I foresaw the necessity of husbanding, with careful economy, my remaining money. I knew the ship could never ride out the gale, and the morning confirmed my worst forebodings. During the night the frigate had driven from her anchor, and had put to sea.

Alone, friendless, and almost destitute, without food or raiment, a wandering outcast was I left in the town of Savannah. Instinctively I walked to the place where I last saw our boat: like the mind of an ungrateful man, the wave bore no mark to recall her to my recollection. I turned once more towards the inn, and was immediately accosted by a short, thick-set, open-faced captain of a merchant-ship, who asked me if I would buy his telescope: he declared nothing but the greatest want could compel him to part with his old companion, which had accompanied him through all his voyages. I asked him how much money he had. He answered, "Not a farthing! I have parted with all my traps, and this is the only remaining commodity with which I could raise a penny." I shook hands with my new acquaintance, who I soon learnt to be a prisoner waiting for a passage to England. Misfortune and poverty are great cementers of friendship; and therefore, showing my friend my only remaining two dollars, I offered him one, on condition that we should mutually assist each other. He stared at my liberality: but I always, through life, thought of the old proverb, "Who gives to worth, receives a benefit;" and I knew, stripling as I was, I should require his assistance and protection. He took the dollar, and, looking at me as the tear stole down his rugged, weather-beaten face, said, "Well, blow me, but you 're a good-looking fellow, and your heart's in the right place; by G—! I'll stick to you as close as your jacket." I felt more relieved by this promise, than if I had doubled my riches.

I had all my life been reckoned one of the best billiard-players in the navy, and it suddenly occurred to me that I might make a few dollars by my science. My new friend started at the proposition, and swore I was going "full sail into the jaws of a shark, who would swallow me, hull, cargo and all, in a trice." I was, however, resolute; and disregarding all the hints of my friend, desired him to show me the most frequented table in the town. Thither we went; and on entering I saw two players, each with cigars in their mouths, and one or two ragged rogues looking on. The marker called the game with the usual

nasal twang, and the players alternately swore in the most refined American diction, as fortune or bungling play declared against them. I sat in silence by my friend, who now and then gave me wholesome advice not to bet with "those lubberly lascars, who looked as yellow as mulattoes, and as thin as herrings." The match was soon over; the winner pocketed some paper cents, and walked out, with a promise of giving revenge to his beaten antagonist in the evening. The loser lingered round the table like Achates at the tomb, and after venting his spleen in loud curses, and whiffing his cigar with accelerated inspiration, swore "he did not value his adversary's play more than a corn-cob; and that, if fortune had stood neuter, he would have worked him as fine as a coral-snake's skin."

This was an opening for me; and I readily consented to his proposition, that his adversary, comparatively speaking, was a perfect bungler. "Now I expect," said he, "that you Britishers play this game." "A little," quoth I. "Well, now, I calculate you think you can play; but I guess you can't." "Well," said I, faltering a little, "at any rate I can play as well as you can, and will play you this moment for a dollar." My friend in the corner gave a loud "Whew!" and followed it up with, "Swamped, by Gemini! done as brown as a nigger, if you're beat!" The Yankee jumped at the proposition; and I, having fished out the only leather-pointed cue in the room, prepared for action. It was proposed to place the stakes in one of the pockets, and with a trembling hand I produced the last farthing I had in the world. The look of my friend was indicative of his feelings: he sat jammed in a corner, his large slouched hat nearly over his eyes, his knees bent up, and his face, which was previously a wholesome mahogany colour, got as yellow as a kite's foot. I knew it was a certainty, providing my fears did not overcome me: I could have given ten points, and still have felt secure; but now, with all I had in the world staked, I felt very differently from other times, when money to any amount could have been instantly procured.

My antagonist took the lead, and scored first; at which my friend gave a most audible sigh, and pumped a loud

"Oh!" He underwent as many contortions of countenance as a tragedy-queen, and writhed his short figure about like a snake in pain. My confidence returned after the first two or three hazards; and my adversary, who had got as far as twenty-two, lost the game. My friend gave a sudden "Hurrah!" and called out, "Touch the rhino!"

That was no part of my plan: so convinced was I of my superiority, I proposed to double the stakes, which was instantly agreed to, and we began again. In about an hour I had won thirty dollars, and declared myself satisfied. The Yankee shouldered his mace, and swore I should not leave the room. My friend d——d him for his impertinent intrusion, asking him at the same time, "Who are you, to stop this gentleman?" "Why, I expect I am a carriage-builder; and I calculate as good a man as any Islander ever born." My friend tripped up his heels, and out we walked as proud as princes.

Having heard that a man-of-war was expected at Wilmington to embark the prisoners, I and my friend, who had got some new rigging over his mast-head, and who looked, when washed and shaved, a very creditable skipper, bent our steps towards Charlestown, and then proceeded onwards to Wilmington. On my arrival there, we contracted for a week's lodging each, washing and feeding included, for three dollars and a half, with brandy-and-water at discretion. Two days afterwards, the *Manly*, a ten-gun brig, arrived. The prisoners had been collected, to the amount of some twenty, all of whom had heard of my sharing my money about eighty times, and all likewise responding to the oft-told tale by acclamations of satisfaction. I was a great favourite, and heard all their misfortunes with an attentive ear, and often moist eyes. Some were perfectly ruined by their capture; some drooped at the frown of fortune, whilst others laughed at their calamities as events in life always to be expected, and never half so bad as they appeared. Amongst this group was a Russian, a man of about six feet in height; a perfect Hercules, and as well formed as an Apollo. He always took me under his protection, whilst my old friend followed me with the attachment of Tom Pipes to Peregrine Pickle.

The day being fixed for the sailing of the *Manly*, the prisoners thought it right to give a dinner to the principal inhabitants, in return for the many favours and kindnesses they had received at their hands. I believe I may say, without fear of contradiction, that throughout the war the prisoners were treated with every respect by their transatlantic foes. The table was amply spread. In America, especially in these parts, the dinner usually consists of good wholesome joints; none of your disguised shoes stewed in beans, as elsewhere; turkeys, hams, &c. are in profusion: and down we sat, about fifty in number, all resolving to have a pleasant party, expressly excluding all political or national songs. In short, no dinner-party ever promised better. We were in the very height of good temper; some, at their restoration to liberty; some at the prospect of future smiles from fortune; and some, who had been all their lives buffeting their foes and the waves, at the prospect of a return home to their fathers' firesides, the embraces of their wives, or the affection of their sisters. After dinner, toast after toast succeeded in rapid regularity; there was no flinching allowed; and, to give Jonathan his due, he seemed by no means inclined to shun the "poison of the nectar'd bowls."

A number of songs had been sung, and I had managed to squeak through an innocent ditty. The call was with me, and I selected a very good-looking friendly neighbour, an American, to keep the society awake. He, poor fellow, declared he never sang — he could not sing; in short, none of his family ever remembered to have heard him attempt to sing. His apologies were of no use, — sing he must. He then confessed he only knew a national song, which would insult his hosts by being sung. "Oh, nonsense!" quoth I, "we are all too well-educated to feel annoyed at an innocent jest." My words were repeated; and Jonathan, clearing his voice, and holding up his head like a man, began to sing the famous song of "The Capture of the *Guerrier* by the *Constitution*," to the tune of "The *Arethusa*." The instant he commenced a solemn silence ensued: it was the treacherous calm before the hurricane. Each eye was fixed upon the unfortunate war-

bler ; and the veriest fool who ever remarked the sun at noon-day might have noticed the gathering clouds upon the faces of the Englishmen. Each verse made the matter worse ; and when he came to the last, which I only heard that once, and which I never shall forget, —

When Dacres saw his ship a wreck,  
Himself a prisoner on her deck,  
His ship's crew in confusion, —  
He raised his head, and, sighing, said,  
“ The God of War to victory led  
Brave Hull in the Constitution ! ”

as the last three syllables trembled from his voice, a decanter struck him on the head, and he was sprawling.

The Americans instantly rose to resent the injury ; the English as quickly forsook their chairs ; and in one minute not a glass remained whole. The tables were upset, the plates smashed, and a scene of confusion ensued not easily described. The hostile parties soon closed for a more determined fight : all the national hatred which war gives rise to, in a moment was the uppermost feeling. Revenge animated the prisoners ; the words had struck deeper than the sword in the hearts of the officers ; and some of the Manly's gig's crew, who were waiting for the captain, caught the enthusiasm. No licensed murderers, called more politely warriors, ever closed with foes more resolutely determined to conquer or die. The Americans stoutly maintained their ground, and were beaten down stairs, disputing every step. At the close of the fight, the Russian captain had seized a stout Yankee, and, lifting him like a child, threw him head over heels over the banisters : he fell with a tremendous crash, and was instantly borne off by his companions. The fall seemed to startle us into the knowledge of the gross violation of all laws of hospitality of which we had been guilty : we looked like boys detected in a theft, and for the moment we drooped over victory in solemn silence. The deed was done, — the Yankee over the stairs : no words could cancel the insult ; and, therefore, knowing “ what cannot be repaired, ought never to be lamented,” we sat down, and, calling for some brandy-and-water, held a consultation how we should act. Short time had we for deliberation : a shout in the street

led us to the window, and there we saw the gathering crowds, coming from all quarters, and meeting opposite the door. Our first step was to fasten the entrance, to blockade the staircase; and we withstood the furious assaults on our castle with wonderful firmness and intrepidity. The Americans, finding us so strongly fortified, retired in good order about twelve o'clock, leaving only a few black-looking gentlemen to disturb our repose. We retired to bed, with an understanding that, at the slightest noise, we were instantly to muster our forces.

About one o'clock, a terrible cry of murder resounded through all our apartments: it was evidently the voice of an Englishman; for Americans, although they have lately published a work purporting to be a true mode of pronouncing English, have a nasal intonation wonderfully discordant to the musical ears of Englishmen. In almost naked nature, we rushed simultaneously into the street: the gig's crew had been attacked, and we found about a thousand Americans heroically pounding four sailors. The impetuous rush of our party checked the operations of the enemy; and after much firing on their side and fighting on ours, we rescued the crew, and brought two prisoners into our hotel. We instantly assembled a court-martial; and perhaps never was there seen a more ludicrous, and yet a more determined scene, than occurred at that minute. We were only *en chemise*, — the American maids peeping into the room\*, where we sat round a table, with our prisoners bound. I, being the youngest, was called upon for my opinion first. I had little to say, excepting a remark upon the cowardly behaviour of our antagonists, who had attacked four innocent men on duty; I therefore adjudged the same criminals to be clobbered (a punishment I will not explain, saving only that a shovel is as good as a besom in some castigations); which being carried unanimously, we forthwith prepared to inflict the sentence upon the culprits. In stripping them, — for I blush to say this operation was requisite, — a pair of pocket-pistols fell from

\* Notwithstanding Mrs. Trollope's "Domestic Manners of the Americans," in which she mentions "that a young lady would not pass a gentleman on the stairs, but run away, calling out 'a man! a man!'" yet did these maids look at us in our dishabille, and saw us safe to our rooms afterwards.

one ; they were loaded and primed, and no doubt had been intended for hostile operations. We, therefore, deferred the punishment, and handed our captives over to the civil power, from which they were shortly released on the payment of one dollar.

We had now no time to loiter on shore : every walk was attended with danger ; and the captain, like a wise man, hastened his departure. We sailed, and arrived at Bermuda as the *Menelaus* was standing out on her way home. I was instantly taken on board, and in eighteen days was at anchor in Portsmouth. I was shortly removed to the *Caledonia*, and having then served my time, passed my examination ; and in consequence of my services, was by return of post promoted to the rank of lieutenant, shipped my epaulette, swore to curse the Pope, and became a commissioned officer. I have often likened this step in the navy to a man who has borne a heavy burden for six years, and who, nearly breaking down under the load, is suddenly relieved from the oppressive weight. From nobody you become somebody : there is no change like this, — the difference between nonentity and identity.

Envy, envy, what a devil art thou ! In our berth we had eight midshipmen all past the age of thirty, and all, thanks to weather-beaten countenances, copious potations, and disappointed hopes, looking at the least forty. When the news flew round the cockpit that I was promoted, who had only just passed, a loud cry of vengeance was uttered against me. I was scoffed at, and reviled ; and why ? — Because fortune had favoured me. It is true, I looked not more than sixteen, for I was slim and taper-formed. From my youth upwards I had been, and have been, one of those men who never repine over temporary misfortunes. I always bow to the storm, and rise afterwards superior to it. My mind has been elastic throughout my whole life ; and if an occasional mishap caused a moment's uneasiness, the sunshine of a light and easy heart dispelled the gloom, and I became instantly blessed with my natural vivacity. Men with such hearts and such minds look always young ; the very contentment of the countenance is indicative of youth ; and some, who are in reality forty, bear the light



mark of the green age of five-and-twenty. Never shall I forget that poor pitiful envy, — the devil in a weak mind: there is his abode; the dingy smoke of his residence clouds and destroys the brain. I offered a feast upon the occasion: the younger midshipmen accepted the invitation, but those who conceived themselves insulted by my promotion, with the pious wish of the devil within them, hoped the dinner might choke me. Hurt at this ungallant answer, I borrowed an epaulette, and the next day appeared amongst the mortified host; one of whom had ordered the boatswain's mate to attend the side for me. I am ashamed to own it, but I felt a moment's gratification when I witnessed the mortification these baby-men endured.

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## CHAPTER XX.

I WAS not very long permitted to enjoy the repose of a half-pay lieutenant; for, scarcely had I succeeded in getting as far as Torquay, when I received a long letter from the Admiralty appointing me to the *Euphrates*, then fitting at Sheerness for the Mediterranean station. She was commanded by Captain P——, was one of the fir frigates, and sailed at the expiration of four months after I joined her. As I consider we have had quite enough of Gibraltar, Malta, &c., I shall at once proceed to Corfu (touching at Algiers), where the *Euphrates* remained for six months, being in attendance on that most singular of all men, Sir Thomas Maitland. Sir Thomas was then lord-high-commissioner of the Ionian Islands, governor of Malta, &c. &c.

On leaving Gibraltar we touched at Algiers; and here, as we were ordered to await the arrival of Lord Exmouth and his fleet, we came to an anchor in the bay, seizing the idle moment to make the ship appear in proper order, as Captain P. was anxious to keep the *Euphrates* prepared for any trip. We had constantly a watering party on shore, and thus had numerous opportunities of seeing the

town, and cultivating a proper understanding with the turbaned Turk.

It was during the fulfilment of the above-named duty that a circumstance occurred, which shows the manners of the Mussulmen, in this quarter of the globe, better than half the travellers' stories ever published. I was in command of the watering party, and, seeing every thing going forward properly, left a midshipman to attend to the duty, while I strolled into the narrow street of the town. Perhaps there is no one place in the whole world where the streets are so desperately narrow as at Algiers ; a donkey coming along with a load of sand occupies the whole space, and the pedestrian must enter a shop to allow the brute to pass. I was wandering on, musing on the strange set of people near me, when I felt my cocked-hat lifted from my head, and saw it thrown in the mud. For this rude insult I received no other account than that I was opposite to the dey's palace, and that all Christians were obliged to pay the compliment which I, from ignorance, had omitted. They took a genteel mode of describing the religion to which I belonged, by making a cross with their fingers ; and, after spitting on it, conferred the same compliment on me.

Seeing that blustering availed very little, I took up my cocked-hat, and, mortified at the adventure, returned to the boats. It was nearly sun-set. A party of slaves were employed (Christian slaves, Dutch, Portuguese, French, English, Italians, — all good men, who had been taken at sea and sold to these barbarians) in conveying large stones to build a battery near the quay. I stood by and witnessed a scene unparalleled as to cruelty. Eight men with long poles were placed to remove a stone, which required at least fourteen persons to lift. The stone was slung, the poles attached to the rope, and the eight unfortunate people, after bending down and placing the poles on their shoulders, endeavoured to raise the weight : of course it was a fruitless attempt. Enraged at the failure, the overseer of a Turk curled his mustachios, and snorted out some dozen of curses upon the heretics. The poor devils seemed to know what awaited them, and made a most vigorous effort to

avoid the punishment. Again they failed. The Turk stamped like a mad bull, and called some of the other inspectors of tyranny to come to him. About five others were instantly at his side, all carrying long bamboos, the thickness of the handle of a carter's whip, and about two yards in length. The slaves, who spoke in the *Lingua Franca*, urged each other to try again, and to use their utmost endeavours. The muscles of the leg seemed ready to burst from their confinement; but in vain they strove, the weight was immovable. Finding the stone motionless, the six Turks began to strike the slaves over the calves of the legs with all their force; and, urging them much in the manner that a Frenchman does his jaded horse, by words, kicks, and blows, they beat the poor devils with such merciless ferocity, that they every one tumbled down over the stone; then were they beaten and kicked until they got up.

It was quite impossible for any one to look quietly on at such wanton, cruel barbarity; and I stepped forward to prevent a repetition of such a disgraceful outrage. As I was alone, and consequently could only use words, I was spit upon again, and scoffed at, and reviled: they even made signs that they would yoke me; then, turning suddenly on their victims, commenced beating them again. Fortunately the time of work had expired. Some signal was given for the slaves to return to confinement, and off limped the eight Christians, followed by the Turks, who beat them to the very door of their prison; and then I heard the savage laughter of their lawless masters.

It was now sun-set, and the gun was fired. At this signal every Turk drops upon his knees, and commences his prayer to Allâh: it is a fine sight, and impresses itself much upon a man's mind. I remember that the finest scene I ever witnessed in my life was in the great square in Mexico, when about four thousand people prostrated themselves as the emblem of Christianity was placed in a coach to be carried to a dying man. The solemnity of the scene baffles description, and was such as I never before or afterwards witnessed. The man stationed in the boat to attend to the casks, finding the water not running with its

usual velocity, endeavoured to ascertain the cause ; and, on tracking the current to its source, discovered a holy Mussulman, in pious reverence, kneeling upon the hose, and consequently closing the channel through which the water rushed. Jack is a very curious fish ; he has no more idea of a man saying his prayers upon a wet piece of canvass than he has of the religion of the Hindoos. Instead of waiting until the Turk had finished praying, or giving the good man a gentle hint, that, while he was forwarding his own heavenly prospects, he was materially impeding other people's terrestrial employment, he took the pious Turk by the heels, and, giving him a sudden haul backwards, popped the good soul's nose in the mud, and left his turban to roll away without the head.

Unfortunately this daring violation of the Mahometan custom was not without witnesses ; and no sooner had the prostrate Turk muttered out his last Allâh il Allâh, than up he sprung, and created a row, which brought to his assistance, or to his call, at any rate, about two hundred followers of his own delicious creed. Short time was there for words. Sabres were soon flourishing in the air ; and a Flemish account of Christian heads would have taken place but for my very fortunate appearance. I found Jack, with his arms a-kimbo, as pleased as Punch at what he had done, laughing and grinning like a happy monkey, and thinking no more of his danger than he did of his duty. Very different was the savage look and curl of the mustachio of the Turks : their faces portrayed a deep revenge ; and the child might have seen a storm brewing, which very few could have allayed. I stepped between the hostile parties, and, with as affable a manner as I could muster, asked, in Italian, the reason of the angry feeling. The cause was instantly explained, but accompanied with no very respectful words as to myself ; I being called in *vicicule* a Christian, and having the usual before-mentioned mode again repeated, by which our religion was despised and insulted. To this I merely responded, that I feared they paid me a compliment my own family would be coy of doing, by declaring me a Christian ; that so far from being insulted at that designation, I was heartily rejoiced to find

some human being disposed so charitably as really to imagine me what I appeared ; and concluded by saying, that neither I nor the boat's crew were responsible for the incivilities of poor Jack, and that as he alone was culpable, he alone should give satisfaction to the offended Turk. I proposed that the latter should be disarmed, and that they should settle the business the best way they could, the rest of our respective parties remaining neuter.

To my very great joy the Turks acceded to the request, and formed themselves in a semicircle, our crew completing the round. It was quite wonderful the good-nature which had superseded the dark frown of the Mussulmen ; they stood with their arms folded, and with a smile at the strange scene. Jack prepared for action according to all received rules and regulations, doubling up his shirt sleeves, and standing in a position creditable to Cribb, and formidable even to a coal-porter : he was a fine brawny man, with muscles like a cart-horse, and seemed to defy all attacks of his enemy. The Turk was not deficient as to anatomical symmetry ; in fact, he was a model of a man ; his large dark eyes seemed glowing with determination and revenge, and he doubled his fist with as much coolness as a professional boxer. They went to work with good hearts, and of course we had no doubt of the termination being favourable to old England and her national mode of warfare. The Turks had pledged their words not to interfere in any manner ; and I had had too many proofs of their religious adherence to their promises in former times to doubt them in the least. This feeling, however, was by no means universal on the part of our men ; they regarded them as a set of good-for-nothing mulattoes, with handkerchiefs round their heads instead of their necks, and who made every Christian a slave from sheer scorn of their faith : they whispered, that the single combat was merely the prelude to a second edition, which would be more comprehensive as to numbers.

In the first set-to, our man was the favourite : the boat's crew of course cheered him on, in their usual rough style of language :—" Now for it, Jack ; pitch it into him : why don't you knock out his head rails, or darken his top-

lights? Why it — *it's* only a Turk, — touch him up on the figure-head." It soon became visible that Jack was no scientific performer, and that the Turk was far the stronger man: he followed up a trifling advantage with perseverance and resolution, and, like all things which are so followed, he became shortly successful; and having forced our man through the circle, he gave him one straightforward blow in the face, which knocked him over the pier into the water. As I considered this quite ample as to satisfaction, and as I was extremely anxious to extricate myself from the very curious position into which I had been forced, I took off my hat to the surrounding multitude, confessed Jack fairly and properly conquered, and, jumping into the boat, into which our champion had been hauled, shoved off for the ship, and was by no means displeased at finding our retreat was not opposed.

This was just prior to Lord Exmouth's first appearance before Algiers: the next morning his fleet arrived in the bay, and the signal was made to prepare for action. We were destined to be the leading frigate into the harbour, and were to have occupied the exact situation which the Queen Charlotte afterwards took up, when that memorable action was fought. When the fleet stood in, we were, from our in-shore position, considerably in advance; and when near the harbour, the wind, which before had become gradually lighter, died away into almost a calm; the signal was made for the fleet to anchor, and those furthest from the shore, still retaining a breeze, bore up and obeyed the command. The Euphrates alone remained stationary, we had no steerage-way, were close to the batteries, and the ship ungovernable. The boats towed our head round, and we ultimately came to an anchor about long musket-range from the shore: of course, we did not relish our position; the fleet were out of shot, even from us; and we were left alone under the muzzles of the enemy's guns. That night the hammocks were not piped down; every thing was kept clear for action, and one watch constantly on the alert. A boat was kept a small distance from the ship, to give the least alarm; and, thus prepared, I took charge of the deck for the first watch. Every thing went

on quietly — not a sound was to be heard excepting now and then the noise of the Turks as they relieved guard, or called aloud every quarter of an hour to show they were on the alert.

Towards eleven o'clock, the look-out man forward reported that he thought he heard the sound of oars. Captain P—— was on deck. I was immediately sent in the cutter to reinforce the other boat, and to hinder the approach of the Turks for a short time, until we had ascertained the intention and the numbers of the enemy, if such they could be called. I passed our look-out, and proceeded in-shore, carefully and silently. On nearing the harbour's mouth, I saw a rather large boat creeping out, and I instantly backed round and remained *upon our oars* (that is, stationary): seeing that only one boat came out, I was satisfied that nothing hostile was intended, and allowed her to come forth pretty close to me. On perceiving us, they immediately laid in their oars, and we overheard them in quick conversation: of course we did not understand one word; it came like one continued word upon the ear, only audible as to sound itself.

We were vigilant as to the operations of the Turks. The night was remarkably fine and bright, with a dead calm: we could distinguish a movement in the after-part of the boat, which created some confusion: but as to separating the white figures, the distance was too great to trust our eyes. A loud scream, and that from a female, startled us into more than usual vigilance; but two minutes had not elapsed before we heard a heavy splash in the water, followed by one or two words from a deep-toned voice, and then all was still. The boatmen again resumed their work, and the silence was broken by the dash of the oar, as the boat retreated to the harbour.

We had no doubt that a murder had been committed near us, without the possibility of our preventing it: and needless would it be here to enter into any detail as to that law, which authorises a jealous husband so quietly and so unceremoniously to dispose of his better half's life without her consent. It is, however, a much better mode of execution than cutting off heads with sabres, and then sticking

them on hooks on the Seraglio wall, like those of bullocks in a butcher's shop; and much more creditable to the living is it, to have the fault and the punishment excluded from the ear and sight, than to hear some good-natured people calling out, "The last dying speech and confession" of a murderer, who is all the while dangling, perhaps in chains, to greet the eye and shock the imagination of the better part of the community. It was a heavy splash; and the silent ocean soon covered the grave, and obliterated the enlarging circle — the only momentary tell-tale of the sepulchre of the dead.

We arrived at Corfu in due time. This is a fine island, with hill and dale, verdure and shade. The citadel is built on a rock, which is separated from the main island by a ditch, and of course communicating by a bridge. We had been at anchor some time previously to the Carnival, and had made, as all men in our profession do make, either real or nominal friends. Our captain had contrived to fall head over heels into desperate love, and amused his leisure moments in cultivating Italian, assisted by the pure pronunciation and brilliant, intelligent eyes of the lovely Madame S. We were in daily intercourse with the 10th and 75th regiments; and, what between riding and rackets, cricket and conversation, the time passed most agreeably, and quickly, without any particular incident to remind us of our mortality.

"One evening, about four days previous to the commencement of the Carnival, a shore-boat came alongside with an old woman quietly seated in the stern-sheets, and looking as indifferent as if she had no particular duty to perform. The sentinel on the gangway warned her off until leave should be obtained; and, in answer to the question of what she wanted, she replied, she wanted me. I was at this time at dinner in the gun-room, when the midshipman of the watch came tumbling down the hatchway, and, in the usual style of communicating events, addressed Bruce, the first-lieutenant, with, "There's an old woman alongside, sir, who says she wants to see Mr. F.; may she come on board?"—"An old woman," I replied, "who wants to see me?—who the devil can it



be? Here," cried I to my servant, "see if it's the washer-woman."—"No, sir," continued the midshipman, "it is not the washerwoman, but a much more lady-like-looking woman, muffled up quite close, and who says she *must* see *you*."—"Very good," said I, "show her up, and down, by all manner of means; I suppose, Bruce, you have no objections?"

"None in the least, F.; and I wish you joy of your conquest."

Whenever a first-lieutenant says what is supposed by people who never stop to think, to be a good thing, all hands in the gun-room laugh. Poor B., the marine officer, who was afterwards killed at Navarino, and who was conspicuous enough from his cocked-hat and long feather, which he would wear in spite of all regulations, joined in the titter, and added, "Yes, yes, Mr. F. is right enough; for the duenna, or, as the French say, the *bonne*, and you will soon whisper to the *senorita*, or, as the French say, *mademoiselle*." As B. will occupy a certain portion of this anecdote, it will be as well to mention that he had been for a long time in a French prison, conversed fluently in that language, and upon all occasions made some allusion to the country in the above manner. He was a most excellent man—had read much, revelled much, was always agreeable in conversation, always good-humoured, and was a marine officer. The old woman, after much care and fright, ascended the side, and then turned round to take a good look at the frigate: the midshipman interrupted the observations of the lady, who, upon close inspection, did not appear *quite* so old as she did in the boat, and, taking her by the arm, invited her below: upon this she withdrew herself, with some Venetian hauteur, and desired to see me. As we heard below every word which passed on the quarter-deck from the gun-room, and thinking that I might as well receive my own communication, I went on deck, and was instantly accosted by the lady. She knew me immediately, although I declare I never remember to have seen her until that moment. She led me aft on the deck until near the taffrail, when, taking a note from her bosom, she delivered it into my hands,

saying, "Un segreto—ricordate." She surveyed me well, and, turning round while I was busily employed in looking at the note, walked towards the gangway; she descended the side, shoved off, and never turned round once between the ship and the shore.

I of course began to decipher the pot-hooks and hangers, miscalled letters, which formed this unexpected medium of communication. The hand-writing was evidently feigned; and there was so much mystery about the whole concern, that I began to fancy it some humbug of my messmates: however, I thought it prudent to "keep my own counsel, and be wise." The note being interpreted, ran thus: "On the second day of the Carnival, between the hours of three and four in the afternoon, be on the Esplanade, unmasked, and in uniform: a female will give you a rose in which there will be a note: mind and follow these instructions: remember you are, and will be, closely watched." There was no signature, nothing to guide the mind—all was mystery, and, provided it was no joke, evidently an intrigue on foot. I do flatter myself that in those days I was rather a good-looking young man—at least, so I have since heard, for friends are shy of telling you that which rejoices the heart until the pleasure is past, and recollection rather disagreeable. A looking-glass, and a good memory, at six-and-thirty, are very disagreeable associates. In spite of all the French dependence on barbers, who carefully select the grey hairs as their victims, some of these cursed heralds of approaching age will now and then show their white faces; and, when I retrace my life, I often think of the good things I have lost, merely by waiting too long to obtain them. Enough of age; it may be, as Chateaubriand says, the most comfortable and satisfactory period of life; but I am all for the reality of Mr. Thomas Moore, of poetical notoriety:

"Give me back, give me back, the wild freshness of morning,  
Its dews and its clouds are worth evening's best ray."

At the appointed hour I was at the place of assignment: it was a crowd, a moving mass of painted faces. I stood as near the centre of the Esplanade, between the bridge and Madame Grassini's, as was possible: heaps of

people passed me—all eyed me, but none spoke. I soon became tired of playing statue, and resolved to consider the note as a joke, and amuse myself to my own taste. A fellow, dressed as punch, attracted a mob, and gradually drew his admirers near me: he then selected me as the object to fire his wit upon; and many a laugh was raised at my juvenile appearance, in opposition to the more manly form of former heroes. I joined in the laugh, and patted punch on his hump; so much to the amusement and the satisfaction of the public, that we very shortly became the objects of universal merriment. Still I kept a vigilant eye upon the surrounding multitude, and thought often of the "*Aspettare e non venire.*" Four o'clock came, and I bethought me that I would go and mention my intention to dine with the officers of the 75th; for we were on those terms of intimacy which the two services ought always to cultivate; and I hope, if this life should meet the eye of some of the officers of that regiment or the 10th, that they will observe, that, although eighteen years have nearly elapsed, I have not forgotten their hospitality and attention, or the many happy hours we spent together.

I had half turned round to execute my intention, when I felt my sleeve gently pulled: the mask was feminine, much about the height of the old lady, but with a pair of dark eyes, which went through me like a flash of lightning through a gooseberry-bush:—I like a good simile. She looked at me very attentively, took my hand, gazed at it, in the manner fortune-tellers are kind enough to do when they predict forthcoming events; and after muttering and mumbling some mixture of Venetian, Italian, and Greek, she took from under her girdle a small yellow flower, put it in my hand, looked as tenderly as eyes could look, and turning short round, was soon lost in the crowd. This may have something to do with it, thought I—it is the emblem of jealousy, which might have been awakened by my talking with the flower-girl. I will be more circumspect in my conduct, and be as reserved as a Spaniard, or a lawyer not inclined to give any facilities, as the humbugging attorneys are pleased to name it. I now stood a perfect Joseph (excepting that I was better garbed), and

kept my ground for a quarter of an hour, when a beautiful little figure came close to me, looked round cautiously, and then, with an elegant courtesy, placed a rose in my hand. I in vain attempted to retain that little beautiful hand in mine; she hastily withdrew, saying, in a *sotto voce*, “Prudenza,—prudenza.” I took the hint and the rose, and retired towards the citadel: the note was there, in the same disguised hand as before, and contained the following directions:—

“To-morrow, a little later, be disguised; follow the person who will give you a *pebble*, and remain in the same place as to-day.”

“Most undoubtedly,” quoth I to myself, “I will obey this injunction; but I will be very nicely armed at all points.” On my return on board, I perceived some joke existed against me; and, after various congratulations as to my success, I was told that the first lady who gave me the yellow flower was the purser’s boy in disguise; and all my fine speeches about her eyes and pretty hands of course told monstrously against my observation on female manners and delicacy. Pleasant enough, thought I; and if the second should be another trick, I will reward the player with many stripes: however, the note gave an air of probability, for no one on board but the Italian master could have penned it, and he and I were too great friends to deceive each other.

The time arrived, and I dressed in a kind of large cloak, borrowed from the theatre, which wrapped close round me, and concealed two very neat little pistols in my waistcoat pockets, and a pretty-fair sized stick in my left hand. I selected about as ugly a mask as I could find, and took my position, awaiting the result. Two or three came close to me — inspected — spoke — but all in vain. I had made up my mind not to say one word, but to follow Miss Pebble, whenever she should make her appearance. My old friend Punch was there, but he did not recognise his brother in folly, owing to the disguise. At last came a little girl with a basket of flowers; she was shorter than the purser’s boy; and this time I knew the hands were feminine: all my resolutions gave way, and I commenced

a conversation with the little fairy. I am very fond of small women, and most cordially abhor any thing in that soft sex approximating to masculine features, or colossal limbs. It is more natural that women should be short — for then we appear their defenders by right: but a tall lady very often looks down on her *caro sposo*; and if once that happens, adieu to all conjugal felicity — no man ought to *look up* to his wife, either for a kiss or advice.

I was in the act of whispering some of those soft mellifluous sentences, which steal on the sense like a breeze over a bean-field, delighting and delightful, when I felt a stone forced into my hand. I turned round, and saw a very old-looking figure hobbling away, supported by a crutch; and, from the pitching and tossing occasioned by her lameness, she progressed about as fast as a boy running up a sand-hill, two feet ahead and one a stern. I left the little flower-girl in the middle of a very fine sentence about love and discretion, which was terminated in rather a different strain, and followed my old friend. She led me, without once looking behind her, through street after street, and some not the widest, until she suddenly forgot her crutch, and ran very nimbly into a house, the door of which was standing open, and which led into one of those large spaces, from which a couple of staircases commenced. I was close at her heels, and followed her into the retreat. She instantly placed her hand upon my mask, and desired me on no account to answer any question I might be asked. It had just begun to rain, and two gentlemen, undisguised, entered the same place to take shelter. Their conversation was various; but the taller of the two always fell away from every topic, to the suspicion of the infidelity of his wife, who, he declared, was out on the Esplanade, so disguised, that even Argus would be puzzled to discover her. He wandered about in conversation from man to man, on whom his suspicions fell; to which I listened with more attention than his friend, for I knew every one personally whom he ventured to suspect.

“Ma de quel maledetto giovane,” continued he, “quel ufficiale della marina, F., cospetto mia moglie è vera-

mente innamorata, è pazza, corpo de Bacco, è pazza por un bambino."

"Bambino!" quoth I to myself; "not such a *bambino* either, but what I can bamboozle you; at least, since I am suspected, it shall not be without some reason."

My old lady was confoundedly fidgety: she edged up to me, and kept eternally making signals for me not to speak, for she saw me eyeing the stranger in order to discover who he was; but certainly I knew him not, although it was pretty evident he must have seen me. The jealous husband, after giving a most amatory "heigh-ho!" which came from the very bottom of his heart, as much as to say, "Curse the hour that I first ventured to say,

'Soffri ch' io ti spieghi l'ardor de questo sen;  
'Soffri ch' io ti dico l'amor mio;'"—

turned round, and saw my old friend and myself huddled up in a corner. "Ah, masks!" said he, and forthwith approached us. Miss Pebble certainly was not as unmoved as a stone; she seemed not to possess a very flinty heart, for it palpitated almost audibly, and she shook and trembled like the top of a cocoa-nut tree in a squall.

"Malgrado il suo travestimento, che è vecchio assai, scometerò che la senorità è ragazzina," said my jealous intruder. Miss Pebble bowed, and I dare say blushed up to the eyes, if we could but have seen it. "Quei occhi de fuoco non sono d'una vecchiarella," he continued; to which my little friend, in a very disguised voice to what she had spoken to me, remarked, "that she would venture a small bet that his wife, of whom he appeared so jealous, from his conversation, had just as good eyes, and was just as pretty as she was;" and concluded by recommending him "to go and console her, instead of making soft speeches to others."

The very instant she concluded the speech I knew my pretty Pebble to be no other than the Countess de B——. Ye gods! thought I, here is a nice affair, if I should be discovered; and then came my old friend, conscience, assisted by its hundred tongues. "What the devil business had you here at all?" said one; "Why did you not burn the note, and forget the contents?" said another; "I al-

ways warned you some mischief would come of this," said a third; "Why don't you do your duty on board, for which you are paid, and not come caterwauling here?" said a fourth. Oh, conscience, conscience, what a busy devil thou art!

"She is pretty enough," said the stranger, "but she wants the small, soft hand, the round ankle, and the ——"

"Oh, bah!" replied the countess.

"The anvil of his speech received the hammer;"

and he turned short round upon me. In the usual courteous mode of those parts he accosted me; to which I made no answer. One of the little fingers, which had been so much praised, was on the lips of the mask, and I understood the hint. He seemed to look through my eyes, which I kept as steady upon his as I could: he then turned to the countess, and scrutinised, as much as the garb would permit, her figure; but, Lord! she had as many twists in it as a corkscrew: she looked as lame as a broken-knee'd post-horse, and the devil himself would have mistaken her for an old hag; but the eyes were young, and fair and beautiful were the features concealed under the painted face. Still did the tall gentleman eye us with most undisguised suspicion; he whispered to his friend, who, after looking at us, as an overseer reviews a slave before he buys him, seemed to make up his mind, and said, "Non—son certo de no." This was pleasant to my ears; for, had it been "certo de sî," the affair would have worn a serious aspect.

The rain had ceased—it was a passing shower, which comes and goes like a child's tears; still my friend seemed determined not to move. At last the companion waved his hand, saying, "Addio, amico mio, a rivederti."—"Stop," said our tall friend; "I will just walk round the Esplanade to look after my wife, and then return home to see if she is *in casa*." He made a very gentlemanly bow to both the lady and myself, and withdrew. No sooner had he turned the corner, than I seized my old lady, and soon convinced her *I* had discovered her, although her own husband had not. The time lost in that house en-

trance might, perhaps, have been more pleasantly passed ; but no human power could recall that now : not a moment was to be lost. I advised her to run home and change her dress and mask, sally out to the Esplanade, and go and coquet with her husband, and, when he became very poetical as to love, to unmask and beard him with his infidelity. I will not satisfy curiosity, by saying if I did or did not raise the mask and warm the lips ; secrets ought not to be betrayed, and that feminine eagerness to know all passing events ought never to be encouraged ; but she was a dear delightful creature ; waltzed like an angel ; sung like a seraph ; whispered as softly and as sweetly as a summer's breeze over new-mown hay ; looked—dear me : I quite forget my age and my grey hairs ; and now that the looking-glass reminds me of my wrinkles, I might as well “ blot out the past.” I wish I could, and go on steadily and soberly, like a line-of-battle ship in a light air.

I was in uniform in about five minutes, and, coming through Grassini's inn upon the Esplanade, appeared amongst the masks again. My little flower-girl was there, and knew me ; but I was on the look-out for a good scene, and kept the tall man and his friend in sight, as I backed and filed amongst the strangers, like a ship tiding it up the Thames. They were both in earnest conversation, and took very little notice of the tom-foolery going on : at last a little figure, dressed as a maid-servant, attracted his notice. She seemed very cautiously to shun him, and he became proportionally eager to speak to her ; at last she appeared to lend a more willing ear to the tender tale, and ultimately the whole three got into conversation. My mind misgave me much as to this being the countess ; for she walked so exactly like the person she mimicked that I was afraid the grand *finale* was not about to take place : however, as I did not know the count, I thought I might range up alongside without giving any offence. I overheard him talking of love, and bright eyes, and all the nonsense, close-packed, which is usual on these occasions. As she told me afterwards, she allowed the count to fix the time and place for the meeting—nay, had intended to keep the appointment ; when the count became determined to scan the features of his conquest, she withdrew the mask, and



there, — there — no room for a doubt — there was his own wife ! She appeared to rally him in good-humour, and, after a tittering conversation, they walked off in pretty fair harmony.

It was our custom always to have a boat waiting in the ditch to take us on board, until ten o'clock at night, at which hour, officer or no officer, she returned on board. Having met B., who was dressed as fine as the fore-horse of a funeral, we dined together at Grassini's, and made the evening pass cheerfully enough ; for, notwithstanding the orders that no officer was to go masked to the balls, we both went in character, and sat by the side, and bored our captain with Italian he did not understand, and French which he cordially detested. The time grew towards ten o'clock, when I told B. I should return on board. He immediately left the ball, dressed himself in his plume and uniform, and followed to the ditch to save his time and passage. He never could see well in broad daylight, and wore spectacles, fastened on his nose by a small chain, which clasped behind his head, and served the double purpose of a stopper to his wig, as well as a lashing for his eyes. I was before him, and arrived at the ditch just in time to stop the boat — embarked, and shoved off.

It was a moonlight night, and the shadow of the cliff on the Esplanade side extended more than half across the river, leaving the double shade on the water near the bank as dark as pitch. B., who had stretched his long legs to overtake me, hearing the oars, bawled out to me to stop ; and I, by way of a joke, said, "certainly," but at the same time remained on the oars : down came poor B., nearly head over heels, down the steps, spluttering out some conversation, passed close to the sentinel, and pushing on to where the boat usually landed, walked right over the bank, and tumbled headlong into the water. He could swim, fortunately, and therefore commenced enacting Leander in good style, at the same time roaring out for assistance. I was too far to know the mischief, and he might have swam to me before I should have gone to him. Poor fellow ! he was like a rat in a tub ; the sides were too high for him to reach the summit ; and every

time he attempted some vigorous effort, down he went, splash over head, wig and all. The sentinel, hearing this unusual roar, came down to the spot, and there seeing only the long feather floating from the cocked-hat, thought it some strange creature, and began to poke at it with his bayonet. My friend soon rectified that mistake by talking; the marine officer was hauled on shore by means of the butt-end of the musket; and, being hailed again, I put back and embarked him.

I never shall forget his curious appearance: the wig, by being wet, had come out of curl, and hung down over his face like the hair on a Russian peasant's head: in his endeavour to clear his eyes of the hair which passed between the spectacles and his face, he had hauled the unfortunate peruke on one side. The elongated visage, and lop-sided wig, surmounted by a cocked-hat and feather, all dripping wet, and distorted, made him appear so ludicrous, that, in spite of all my official dignity, I burst out into a violent roar of laughter, which, to the poor sufferer's extreme annoyance, was caught by the boat's crew, and I could neither restrain myself or others from so improper a degree of familiarity. Poor B. ! after abusing me for not coming to his assistance, fell into his usual strain of conversing — "*Quand l'occasion exige*, as the French say, assistance should be speedily granted; and although the catastrophe was ludicrous, the indecorous manner of betraying the feelings is — *un peu trop fort* — as they say." — I admitted the justness of the remark to the fullest extent, but could not, for the soul of me, halt in my laughter; and the scene finished by landing him safe on deck and his retiring to his cabin, under a volley of his own "*sacre*."

It was not very long after this little adventure, which I am by no means inclined to finish, and was only begun to show how very nicely the devil does sometimes contrive to oppose all our plans, however well laid; the danger of making a third person alive to our suspicions touching conjugal felicity; and, in short, to prove

"How oft a day which fair and mild appears,  
Grows dark with fate, and mars the toil of years,"

that the insurrection in Corfu took place, or rather was crushed in the bud, at the very moment it might have burst into a blossom. The result was that the unquiet subjects were seized in the very act of hatching treason, brought to the palace, which was then in the citadel, and tried in an adjoining room that very night. On this occasion, as I believe, even Sir Thomas Maitland did not know the exact number of malcontents likely to raise the standard of rebellion, every precautionary measure was taken to ensure order being instantly restored, and the whole party seized. That night I was sent with the boats of the *Euphrates* to defend the ditch, or rather, in case of necessity, to be instrumental in blowing the bridge to pieces. I took my position in B's Bath, as we afterwards named the place where that cold dip occurred; and placing each boat so that the carronade would bear, I landed and walked to the governor to report my arrival, and to mention the situation I had taken up. I was dressed like Robinson Crusoe, more than like a young officer; for, from the order for our boats, I considered a little brush as quite inevitable.

On my reporting myself to the aide-de-camp, I was desired to walk in, as Sir Thomas wished to see me. He smiled when he saw my altered appearance, and kindly said, "that I appeared to come well prepared to assist him in one way, but that he wished me to oppose him in another." I bowed. "Come here," said he, "and we will have a game of chess." He was passionately fond of this game; and although by no means a first-rate player, or a match for his antagonist, Sir Frederick Hankey, yet would he toil and toil to gain a victory, which, it was evident, was purposely lost on one side, or so beautifully played, as to make it appear a consequence of superior skill. I was a much better rival of Sir Frederick; and a pawn brought us on an equality. I had constantly spent hours and hours with Sir Thomas at this sport; and therefore, divesting myself of my pistols and sword, I came to my post of honour, undismayed by my antagonist. By the side of the chess-table was placed a small round table, on which stood some madeira and water, the usual oeve-

rage, even for breakfast, of this extraordinary man. During our different games reports were brought from the council-chamber, of the delinquency or the acquittal of the various prisoners. It was received with the usual coolness, and the remark occasioned by the intelligence did not at all interrupt the game. "The Count de S. is proved guilty, your excellency;" not a shadow of doubt but that he was in close communication and alliance with the insurgents, was reported by Sir Frederick, then only Colonel Hankey.

"Very well, Hankey, I'm sorry for him; he must sweep the sheets with a log of wood fastened to his feet, on which his name must be distinctly marked: — and here is check to your queen, Mr. F.!" The same tone of voice ran throughout the whole sentence: there were no stops; it was all in a breath, and was finished by a sip of his nectar.

That night I played with him until two o'clock in the morning, when I was dismissed in about as courteous a manner as Captain Tower of the Curaçoa used to warn us of the time being arrived for our departure, after some of his midshipmen's hops off Toulon. — "Gentlemen," he used to say, "the commanding-officer of his majesty's squadron off Toulon thinks it high time for those who have the middle-watch to turn in, the morning-watch to get to sleep, and the first watch to attend to their duty. — Good night;" and forthwith off we scampered to our boats. Sir Thomas said, "The services of the boats of the Euphrates are no longer wanted; and it would be prudent to give your men as much rest as possible, because they will be required to-morrow." Whereupon I bowed and retired.

Sir Thomas Maitland, although beloved by the navy for his kindness and attention to every ship in the squadron, was by no means so much admired by the army. He kept them pretty tightly to their duty, and very few enjoyed much of their time in shooting woodcocks in Albania: he was one of the coolest and most decisive men I ever knew. On our entering the bay at Zante, we stood very close to the shore, when suddenly the wind failed, and left us in a

dead calm : before this could be reported to the captain, the frigate nearly lost her way, and when the order was given to put her head off shore, she refused to answer her helm : a light baffling breeze taking us aback, the ship tailed upon a shoal, and remained fast. Captain Preston, whose mind had been in a state of great excitement at Corfu, and when freed from that was rather a hasty personage, cursed and swore, and raved at the wind. Sir Thomas sent up word to fire a gun or two ; and, as the garrison knew the governor was on board, assistance would be procured, and the ship extricated from her unpleasant situation. There was a small ground-swell, and the continual striking was by no means comfortable. Sir Thomas was busily employed as usual at chess ; but hearing the noise increase, he came on deck, remarking in his broad Scotch, " Why, captain, how did you manage this ? " The answer was, " Oh, curse her, she got into irons, and there she stuck, d——n her. "—" Hankey," said Sir Thomas, looking down the hatchway, " move the pawn on, and that's check-mate ! "

On another occasion, in Ithaca, where we were really in a very awkward predicament from the depth of water being so great, that the anchor did not reach the bottom until the ship had drifted close to the shore, owing to a mistake in the leadsman calling out that he had soundings, when at that moment we were in at least a hundred fathoms of water, the ship brought up with a sudden jerk, for the wind was very fresh and squally, Sir Thomas, who was on deck, coolly remarked, that " touch and go marked the good pilot. " He was the easiest man in the world for a sailor to ingratiate himself with ; he always fancied himself a good seaman ; and he certainly understood some little of the evolutions. Whenever it was my morning watch, I made it a point to leave the foreyard not nicely trimmed. The instant Sir Thomas came on deck he looked aloft, and was sure to say, " I think, sir, the foreyard would bear a pull of the lee-brace. "—" Yes, sir," I replied, " I was just about to order the watch aft, so to do. " He would be as pleased at my agreeing and altering the sails at his suggestion as a child would be with a plaything. Surely, if such

trifles can yield pleasure, we have a fair right to sacrifice a mile or two's progress to such a gratification. At his table there was always a plate for us, although he himself, from his abstemious mode of living, seldom dined in public. The box at the opera, either at Malta or Corfu, was at our service ; and I believe every captain but *one* on the station will bear witness to the fact, that they were always welcome at the palace ; had apartments always provided for them while they remained in harbour, and received as much hospitality and attention as was possible to be offered. He certainly betrayed great partiality for our profession ; and this I rather think is the reason that he was not so much prized by our brethren. But no man can deny that Sir Thomas Maitland knew human nature well, and knew how to govern with discretion, — knew when mildness would be as efficacious as wrath, and knew the dispositions and characters of the Greeks and Maltese better than any man either before or after him. I have mentioned him here, firstly, because he was a conspicuous character, and was my friend, and secondly, because I have lately seen some poor, paltry, pitiful feelings, against Sir Thomas Maitland, as perfectly false, as they are malicious and unfounded. He is dead ; and so

“ A long good night to Marmion.”

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## CHAPTER XXI.

I HARDLY know how to gloss over the reason that the Euphrates was not in the action at Algiers. To place the affair in the right point of view, would be to expose the weakness of the human mind. True, however it is, that we were not in the action, and that owing to our not giving the intelligence of Lord Exmouth having sailed, which was communicated to us at Leghorn, from the minister at Florence, the admiral, and many of the squadron, arrived in the Bay of Algiers after that brilliant action had been fought. To attribute anything like cowardice to P——, would be the

height of folly : he fought one of the finest gun-boat actions in the Faro of Messina on record ; and his general character was that of a very strict harsh officer, and a brave and gallant fellow. He is the only instance that I have ever known of a man losing all thought, all command, all mind, through the influence and power of love. We do see occasionally blockheads, so deplorably absent, as to be making loud lamentations on infidelity in the public streets ; we see men occasionally supporting their thick heads in their hands, and crying and blubbering like children over a refusal, occasioned by their own precipitate conduct. Let all my readers remember this ; that you may safely call a man a lout who ever is refused by a woman. The slightest knowledge of the sex is sufficient to see if you are well received. There is as much difference between the look of common friendship, and the absent glance of affection, as between chalk and cheese ; the one bright and kind, the other half swimming in moisture, and seeming to rest on the object, without power of being removed. I once thought of imitating Ovid, and writing an " Art of Love ;" but he was a consummate master of arts, and I should only have added a few lines to his, which the altered state of society renders imperative to be observed. If a man cannot feel his way to a woman's heart, and know when he has possession of the citadel, he must be either a most uncommon cool man, or an uncommonly stupid one. The captain fell in love — most desperately in love with a very beautiful married lady at Corfu. I believe it was mutual ; certainly she did not resist the unlawful temptation, neither could she be deceived as to his affection. He would sit for hours at the governor's balls, either by the side of this beautiful woman, or his eyes would be riveted on her if she danced. Such an ascendancy did he possess over her, that she seldom would dance without his permission ; and this I know, because I often interpreted his sentences ; he being one of those men, often seen, who have not the slightest aptitude for foreign languages. I have known him walk up and down his cabin, with Ciceloni the Italian master seated by the table, for an hour repeating, or endeavouring to repeat, the verb *amare* ; it

was always a failure; the subjunctive mood was the "asses' bridge;" he never got clear of that to the day of his death. How he made love I know not, saving that all proficients in the art know that the eye is much more powerful at the beginning than the tongue; and so we become acquainted with the first mutual feeling, by the gaze of woman.

*"Primis in omnibus præliis oculi vincuntur."*

If ever a woman sees a man's eyes constantly fixed upon her, depend upon it she soon begins to feel a flutter at the heart; her eyes will by the merest absence or inadvertence, turn to see if she is still admired, and perceiving it is the first grand step and inroad to a woman's affections. It was Wilkes, I believe, who was as ugly as any monkey in Africa, who said he was only half an hour behind the handsomest man in Europe. He had a great advantage in both eyes and tongue, for he squinted so abominably, that you could not escape his cross-jack glance; and he had "a tongue to wheedle with the devil." Be love what it may, certain it is that P—— found some overpowering authority fixed upon him. He neglected the ship entirely; or when he came on board, he would walk twice up and down the deck without saying a word, go down into his cabin, send for his steward, and then tell him he did not want him; return on deck, jump over the side before either boatswain or officers could attend, and then remain on shore about a week without visiting us.

I beg particularly to be understood here, as by no means wishing to spin out a chapter to suit my own purpose; but to mention one or two circumstances to convince some captains, who afterwards refused to associate with poor P——, that he erred from a distracted mind; and not, as one of these gentlemen publicly said at Malta, from a cowardly disposition: neither should I have brought him forward, who has long since been buried in Portsmouth church-yard, but that I heard, and not long ago, a certain officer of high rank condemning my old captain in no measured terms; and railing at him, because he was deprived of being present at the action. I will always advocate the cause of the unfortunate. Can we envy the



man who possesses not sufficient Christian feeling to pity, rather than condemn, the weakness of human nature ?

"Peter," said I one day to his servant, "how is the captain this morning ?"

"Pretty well, I thank you, sir, but very curious."

"Very curious ! what the devil do you mean by that ?"

"Why, sir, this morning, when I went to awake him at seven o'clock, I found him in his full uniform : he had been up all night brushing his clothes, and had placed them in small heaps, through which he was going in and out, like a lady in a reel."

"Well, Peter," said I, "what then ?"

"Oh, sir ! I told him that I came to awake him ; upon which he said he was just going to bed, and desired me to pull his boots off ; but when I took them off, he put his hands in the boots, and said he wanted to pull his feet out, which were left behind."

"Very well, Peter ; curious enough, indeed ! now, don't you say one word about this to anybody ; and mind you keep a sharp look-out upon him."

This was the first grand proof what love had done. In his conversations he began an anecdote, broke off in the middle, and after a pause began again, and so went on. His eyes became glassy and absent ; there was a disposition always to keep the mouth a little open ; but when the lips were closed, they were compressed more than was natural : his walk was now become always hasty, his head was stooped forward, and he talked to himself most convivially. At the very moment when all this mischief was working, an order came for the *Euphrates* to return to Malta. His parting scene I did not witness, but it was a painful one : however, he knew he was to return. Our destination was to Genoa, where we landed Sir Thomas Maitland, then going to England ; our orders being to await his return at Marseilles.

After remaining some time at Genoa, we removed to Leghorn, and here I took up my lodgings on shore with the captain. It was one day that we were at Pisa, and had placed ourselves on the summit of the fallen tower, looking with rapture at the rich scene around us, when

we saw the first-lieutenant approaching as quickly as his short legs would let him. He came like a messenger after a battle, and evidently bursting with impatience and news. He had hardly got within hail when he began — “that a courier had arrived from Florence with despatches of the most urgent kind, and awaited the return of the captain in Leghorn, with the greatest impatience;” but the captain had no such impatient feeling, for we slept at Pisa that night, and the next morning returned. No sooner did we arrive at our lodgings, next door to the alabaster shop, than the courier unburdened himself of his despatches and his news. It amounted to this, that a fleet was fitting out under Lord Exmouth for Algiers; and that it was requisite to apprise Admiral Penrose of this movement, in order that the squadron might be in readiness to assist at the siege.

“Is this all?” said the captain, and he handed the letter to me. “I thought,” he continued, “it might have come from Corfu. What have I to do with fleets and admirals?” The first-lieutenant and myself most urgently requested him to put to sea immediately; that the news was of the greatest importance; and that his and our honours and credit were involved in great difficulties, and would be compromised by his refusing. Perhaps here I may be permitted to explain, that any disaster in a ship fixes a stigma on all hands: whereas any brilliant achievement, although only one or two directly benefit, yet the crew share the honour, which is showered upon them by the other ships of the fleet. For instance, many of the lieutenants in poor sacrificed Byng’s engagement never were promoted, as the failure of that action was the cause assigned: they had as much to do with it as the Pope. When Chads, who so gallantly fought the *Java*, after the death of *Lambert*, and who fought her until she *sunk*, applied to a coxcombical nincompoop of a secretary (I don’t mean Mr. Croker), he was told by the quill-driving high-stool clerk, “That *we* (meaning the Lords of the Admiralty) never considered misfortune the road to promotion.” That is not a bad speech for “the foolscap gentleman turned up with ink!”

Nothing could move the captain; he declared he did not believe it at all, and that his orders were imperative to await the arrival of Sir Thomas Maitland at Marseilles.

In about ten days afterwards down came another courier with intelligence that the fleet had sailed, and urging us to depart immediately. To this the captain assented, and the next morning we got under weigh. It was a foul wind for Malta; and, on clearing the roadstead, the first-lieutenant began to trim the sails on a wind. The captain, however, called the master, and desired him to shape a course for Marseilles. To this order the master very properly remonstrated; firstly, because we were all convinced, from recent events, that the captain was not exactly in a proper state of mind to consider consequences, and yet so very reasonable at times, that none ventured to propose the necessity of relieving him from the command of the ship; — secondly, we were all involved in the disgrace, knowing the state of mind he was in, and yet allowing him to fulfil his original instructions under such peculiar circumstances. What could be done? If he recovered — which even the excitement of contradiction might have effected, by banishing the cause of his malady from his mind, we might have been tried for mutiny; and captains are wonderfully tenacious, and very properly so, of any encroachment upon their authorities. They are absolute kings; and absolute monarchs are not gentlemen to be trifled with.

Does any man fancy that if the emperor Paul had escaped, by a promise to his murderers of better government for the future, that the next day any one of the conspirators would have had a tongue to wag in his own defence, or a head to suggest the necessity of the act? Not a bit of it. If a captain came before a court in perfectly sound health and vigour of mind, it would require some very convincing evidence to put the members of that court, all captains, mind you, quite at ease upon the subject. We did not take the command from him; neither do I think, after this lapse of time, upon cool consideration, we should have been justified in so doing, although subsequent conduct, which we, not being like

Mrs. Norman, the she-prophet, could not foresee, might have been a justification. Therefore we were overruled, and the ship entered the harbour of Marseilles; where we did some mischief, by breaking every window in a narrow street by firing a salute in the close harbour; and we entered (no doubt by way of compliment to the Bourbons) playing Buonaparte's grand Coronation March by express desire of the captain. It was in this harbour that we first heard of Lord Exmouth's success. The news was brought by a Dutch frigate which had shared the honour, and the officers of which ship did seem rather surprised at finding an English frigate moored stern to the wharf, like a merchantman, when such things had been doing. We remained in Marseilles a month, and then again visited Corfu.

It was during our passage that one of those painful sights occurred, so often witnessed in a sailor's life, when a companion in sound health is swept from the world by one of those accidents against which skill is of very trifling avail. The report of a man overboard is the electric spark of compassion which runs through the heart of every man or boy in the ship. On these occasions every individual is a volunteer, and you experience more danger from the rush of assistance than from its delay. The morning breeze had gradually freshened until noon; at which time, generally speaking, in the Mediterranean, the wind begins to slacken its force, and dies away with the setting sun, leaving night and calmness over the face of the ocean. If the breeze freshens after noon, in all probability it will bluster into a gale. About two P.M. the hands were turned up. "Reef topsails!" and the rigging as instantaneously was crowded by the seamen, all willing and eager to get the start of their comrades, by stealing up a ratline or so in advance. "Away aloft!" and away they went. In the mean time, on deck, the weather-topsail-braces were rounded in; and when the canvass began to shake in the wind, the words "Lower away the topsails" rung through the trumpet. The braces being properly belayed, "Trice up, lay out," soon sent the men on the yards; the reef tackles were hauled out, and the

command given "to take in one reef." Then all was emulation; the fore-top men to hear the officer in the fore-castle report "All in forward, sir;" the main-top men to listen to the first lieutenant's voice chiding the officer forward, with "Well, Mr. W., are we to wait all day for the fore-top-men?" the marines and after-guard whispering to each other, "steal away, steal away," implying a wish to get the topsail-yard a foot or two aloft, so that when the general order came, to "hoist away the top-sails," the maintop-sail-halliards would be belayed before the leach of the foretop-sail was sufficiently taut.

It was during the time that the men were on the yards, and the first-lieutenant cheering the maintop-men to "bear a hand and lie in" (not a bad phrase for a midwife), when an increased puff of wind, which came about two points further aft than its predecessor, filled the maintop-sail, and carried away the weather-maintop-sail-brace. The yard flew fore and aft in a trice, and four men were thrown from their perilous situation; two in the bunt of the yard fell into the top; one caught the foot-rope, and recovered his position; but the fourth fell overboard, and barely cleared the ship's side. The ship had not the slightest way through the water, but was drifting to leeward, as ships always must do in similar situations.

Every man on deck instantly ran to give assistance. The cutters on the quarters were unfortunately covered; and this precaution to hinder the sun from drying the planks, and consequently making the boat leak, is too often followed in warm climates. I jumped into the main-chains for the lead-line; but, in well-disciplined ships, the lead-lines are always dried and replaced in the boatswain's store-room when the ship is out of soundings. At this moment the man appeared almost under the main-chains, gradually as the ship drifted to leeward increasing his distance. He could not swim, or rather, could barely keep his head above water by struggling. He looked at me with such a piteous eye for assistance, as I called to one of the men to give me an oar out of the launch, which I thought I could manage to throw near enough to him to aid his life. It was at that moment I thought of jump-

ing overboard myself, and using my skill as a swimmer. What cowardly thoughts, what hints of danger, deterred me, I know not ; for I have done it since, and when I had more to lose : but I remained with my eyes riveted on the struggler ; in vain he beat the water ; it was evident what little he knew of swimming was lost by his greater fears : and life was near its close, with a frigate and three hundred men within speaking distance.

As always happens on these occasions, or rather verifying the adage, "the more haste the less speed," the lacing of the cover of the boat was so entangled that the knife was requisite. It was some minutes before she was unclothed ; and when she was lowered and in the water, the cover hung fast to the bows, and most materially impeded her progress. In vain the men on board cheered their companion : his endeavours were becoming less and less useful, and twice had he sunk before the oars were at work for his rescue. "Give way ! give way, my lads !" resounded from the ship. In vain they urged, in vain others plied ; the unhappy man disappeared before the boat was within reach ; and so near was his rescue, that, as he sunk, the bowman, who endeavoured to fasten the boat-hook into his clothes, and thus extricate him, actually touched him with the extremity of the iron. Had the staff been two inches longer, that man, who was then dead to all intents and purposes, might have been resuscitated. The melancholy manner in which the ship's company, on seeing the ineffectual elongation of the bowman's arm, as he thrust it and nearly half his body under the water, gave vent to their disappointed hope, was of that sincere kind, when the heart speaks, — "He's gone ! he's gone ! poor Tom !" It was a melancholy sight, and shows the capriciousness of fate.

I remember, in the *Menelaus*, off the coast of Sicily, on a dark night, when the ship was going about five knots through the water, a seaman fell from the *royal* yard-arm overboard. He could not swim twenty strokes ; and yet that man, whom we instantly lost sight of, and who was left half a mile astern before the ship could be rounded-to, and the boat lowered, was saved. Verily, verily, are

our days numbered. That man scarcely came out of the doctor's list before he was sent away to cut out a vessel under the round tower of Terracina, and was the first man killed. Well did the poet say —

" Fate steals along with silent tread,  
Found oft'nest in what least we dread ;  
The earthquake may be bid to spare  
The man who's strangled by a hair."

I leave my readers to moralise over the anecdote. There is not, nor has there been for the last twenty years, a better sailor or more efficient officer in the navy than Bruce, who was then our first-lieutenant : he was the most careful man to prevent accidents I ever knew ; and woe betide the man who went up with the yard, or was lowered upon it ; no sliding down ties to assist in the hoisting, and no hoisting until every man was in. Who can be blamed if a rope gives way ? the lee-brace was as taut as a harp-string, and there could have been no jerk ; it was one of those accidents no human foresight can provide against ; and to remedy a like occurrence, the boats on the quarters were never again covered from that day to the day the frigate was paid off. It is quite astonishing the difference observed on board a ship in the execution of orders after an accident of this kind ; there is always, in well-regulated ships, a silence during any evolution ; but on these occasions, the hoisting the boat up and making sail seems done by automats ; even the order is given in a lower tone of voice ; and, for the moment, the light-hearted sailor feels the power of thought even on his untutored mind. Many a man passes a funeral in a street without the thought of death recurring to his mind : but when in active employment, in health, and strength, a comrade is swept from the world—not in the noisy clamour of an action, but in the stillness of the deep—thoughts, ay, solemn serious thoughts, steal over the mind, and reality forces upon us the observation, that our own lives are equally precariously situated, and equally likely to be forfeited by even a gust of wind, or the snap of a rope.

Our arrival at Corfu again was welcomed by all our old friends ; our boats again contributed by sailing-matches to

enliven the scene ; the fowling-pieces were again heard as the sportsman brought down some of the plentiful wood-cocks ; the rides to the one-gun battery ; the pic-nics, &c. ; — all contributed to make our lives pass easily and comfortably at that delightful island. Still however was love working hard at our captain's heart ; a child might have foreseen the mischief accumulating ; daily and nightly was the chain winding round him, which he had not now energy enough either to avoid or break.

A month had hardly elapsed, and preparations made for a cruise to Ancona and Venice, when the arrival of another frigate dissipated our plans, and brought orders for our immediate return to England. We were desired to proceed in the first place to Malta, and there await the arrival of the packet, as it was probable that a counter-order might arrive. It did not arrive, and we got under weigh again for Gibraltar, touching at Carthage, Barcelona, and Malaga : ultimately we arrived at the Rock, and forthwith began to look out for any freight to be sent to England. There had been some of those too convincing proofs that the captain was giving way fast. His conversations always ended in some reference to his lady, and his wish to return to Corfu : he was moody and melancholy — absent beyond all idea of the word ; and, like men in that situation, always fancying that those around him were in league against him ; that some conspiracy was hatching, and that he was to be the victim. He fancied he saw the devil ; but his description by no means tallied with the drawings of that ugly gentleman : in fact, every other hour in the day he was mad.

In harbour, men-of-war prepared for sea generally cross the top-gallant yards, at eight o'clock in summer, and nine in winter : it shows your readiness to start at a moment's warning ; and it is good practice for the seamen : employment is the soul of discipline — idleness and regularity are very poor associates, and sailors always get into mischief when they get into repose ; nothing shows the excellence of a first-lieutenant more than his power of finding something to do for the men, after the ship is once in good order.



The hands were turned up — “Up top-gallant yards!” the first-lieutenant and captain both were on deck, and the duty was executed with that promptness and alacrity which was conspicuous on board the *Euphrates*; even the captain applauded, and it was rarely he did so, for his mind was elsewhere. It was my morning-watch; and when the first-lieutenant had piped to breakfast, I took charge of the deck. According to the respectful rules of the navy, the officer of the watch always walks by the side of the captain; and scarcely had we the deck to ourselves, than the captain asked me to breakfast with him, which I accepted. — “I am glad, sir,” I continued, “to see you looking so well: I suppose you will be able to go on shore to-day?” — “Thank you, F.,” he replied, “I feel much better, and think that a walk will do me good. Come down to breakfast, and leave the midshipman of the watch in charge of the deck.” To this I acquiesced, and we went down to breakfast. During that repast he was unusually distinct in his expressions: his observations on all subjects were correct; and we got through the meal with a great deal of conviviality and pleasure. The only remark I made was, that the captain ate with a surprising greediness and avidity — not masticating but *bolting* the bread: his eye was more watchful than usual on me, and he seemed annoyed at always finding me looking at him.

The breakfast done, I arose, made my bow, and retired. I had not got as far as the hatchway, leading into the steerage, before I heard a cry of murder, and Peter the servant calling for assistance. The sentinel immediately rushed in, and I followed to behold my captain stretched upon the deck, his throat cut, and Peter kneeling on his breast to keep him down. The first words he uttered were, “Peter, Peter, I have known the time that if you had knocked me down as you did just now, you would have been hung for it.” Peter reported, that no sooner had I shut the door, than the captain seized the breakfast knife he had used during that meal, and cut his throat: fortunately the wound only grazed the artery, and consequently was not mortal. It was immediately sewn up;

the patient placed upon his sofa with two attendants ; and shortly afterwards he fell into a profound sleep. This was a very awkward business indeed, and we felt the painful alternative to which we were obliged to resort ; namely, to place the ship in the hands of the first-lieutenant ; and, after a council of the officers, it was deemed advisable to get under weigh immediately, and proceed to England with all despatch.

About six o'clock the captain awoke in a perfect state of insanity ; it became necessary to secure him in a strait waistcoat ; and seventy-two hours afterwards he was a corpse ! He died in violent agony : his raving was a dream of misery, but so varying in its nature as to become perfectly ridiculous at times ; so much so, indeed, that no one could avoid bursting into a fit of laughter. I remember once, after we had shuddered at his recital of the pain he was experiencing, believing himself in the Spanish Inquisition, and undergoing all the torture of exenteration, he suddenly changed his tone, and began to fancy himself a pig at a fair, to be chased by the boys of the parish : — “ *Grease my tail, grease my tail,*” he would exclaim ; “ I defy the boys to catch *me* ;” and then he would grunt, and endeavour to imitate the hog ; but the circumstances most upon his mind were the parting at Corfu, and the not going to Algiers. On the last he raved more than on the former, abusing himself for not obeying the wishes of his officers.

It was decided to place him in a cask of spirits, and thus to take the body to England for interment. Sailors are curious fellows — superstitious to a most extraordinary degree, and yet capable of being excessively droll on the very subject they fear most. I have known a ship's company refuse to go to sea on board the ship where a mummy had been placed for a passage ; and I have known the men refuse to give up a body to be buried. Here was a case where the assistance of some men was required, for it was necessary to dress the captain, and to place him in the cask before the limbs had stiffened into deathly immobility. This fell to the lot of his own servant Peter (who I verily believe was as much afraid of him when

dead, as he had been during his life-time), and the purser's steward, assisted by the cooper.

When the head of the cask was taken out and the limbs of the deceased were bent into a sitting position, all the parties manifested considerable fear in placing the corpse; and on being rallied for their childish weakness, they made one of those excuses suggested by fear—"that they did not mind doing it, but he looked as if he did not like it." No sooner, however, was he placed in the cask, than they resumed their courage, and began to prepare to fill him up with rum. At this ceremony his cockswain attended, and proposed, out of pure regard for his late master, to drink his safe passage to heaven. There could be no objection to this, and forthwith the three persons began to get ready for the toast. "Well," said Peter, "I dare say, now the captain's dead and gone, you forgive him all the wrongs he did you?"—"O yes," replied the cockswain, "I forgive him of course; but—"—"But what?" said Peter. "But," continued the cockswain, "if the devil does not get him, *he ought to lose his place!*"

The cask was lashed to the mizen-mast in the fore-cabin; and directly the men retired to rest, or that night came on, and the watch on deck went to sleep, the sentries were always remarked to walk fore and aft the deck instead of athwart, which is the usual mode with marines on guard at the cabin-door; and, strange as it may appear, this fear of the dead was felt by some of the living of higher rank, whose courage and determination in the hour of danger was unquestionable. How perfectly unaccountable, that when a body is placed in that situation, as to render it impossible to be injurious to others, from that moment it is more feared, and more dreaded, than when clothed in all the pomp of military parade, having the power to inflict punishment, or to entail disgrace. This is not only common to sailors, but to those who make it a profession to sit up with the dead. I remember asking an undertaker's man if he felt any fear at being alone with the corpse all night. "At first, sir," he said, "I felt more than I can explain; but now, with plenty of lights and some books, I don't mind it much, if *the door is locked.*"

— “Egad!” I replied, “that is the very thing that I should not like, for one would be fumbling half an hour with the key; and, whenever fear commences, the chance of doing any thing right is more than doubled.” — “Very true, sir,” he replied, “but what man has nerves enough, at the dead of night, sitting by a corpse, if the door should slowly open, occasioned perhaps only by the wind — what man, sir, do you think could face that?” — thereby admitting that all the practice, all the coolness and courage which experience generally gives, could not surmount that extraordinary feeling of fear for the dead, and apprehension of mischief from an inanimate being. But these undertakers are bold men by daylight, when surrounded by numbers.

On our arrival at Portsmouth, we desired an undertaker to send a coffin on board, and properly to prepare the corpse. When his men came on board, and the head of the cask was knocked out, they placed the captain on the deck, the master of the gang sitting down, and putting the head upon his knees. He began coolly to pat the face until it assumed its living features, and then called out to his foreman, — “I say, Mr. Wilkins, don’t you remember this here gentleman? — why, he was the tall captain what always went to the theatres.” He was buried with military honours at Portsmouth; and shortly afterwards we were ordered round to Deptford, and there were paid off; and once again being placed on half-pay, I took up my quarters in Grosvenor Place, and commenced gentleman.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

I now began to turn my attention to study, and I hope made some amends for the loss of past time; but my father never allowed me to be idling my time on shore. I had chosen a profession, and, war or peace, I was doomed to follow it; even a guard-ship was preferable to none at

all ; at least so I was desired to say. At the expiration of the year I found myself on board his majesty's ship *Bulwark*, then bearing the flag of Sir John Gore, at Chatham. To an active mind, there is no punishment like being in a guard-ship. Adam and Eve never could have been more puzzled to get through the twenty-four hours, than a marine officer in the above situation. We had only men enough to keep the ship clean : we could no more man the *Asp*, our tender, and cross top-gallant-yards of a morning, than a collier could have done it. In short, we were placed afloat, it is true ; but in every other respect mere idlers on the face of the waters.

I soon got sick of this, and therefore volunteered to command the *Asp* ; a little revenue cruiser, having thirty men, and no possible comfort. It has been my lot, and I do not regret it, to serve in every sized ship in his majesty's navy, from the *Caledonia* to the *Asp* ; and certainly in this latter vessel the time passed about as uncomfortably as any time could pass ; it was always one continued wet life, without the possibility of being rewarded for the keenest cruising. She sailed so badly that it was the snail after a hare, whenever we chased a smuggler. The only near chance I ever had was one night between Orford Ness and Yarmouth. It was blowing a gale of wind, and the little tub was rolling and kicking about like a drunken man. It was dark, cloudy, murky, rainy, and gusty, when a vessel was reported on the weather-beam. I immediately came on deck, and made her out to be a fishing-boat, but the pilot declared she was a smuggler : we therefore fired a shot to windward ; for as to firing *at* her, the thing was perfectly impossible ; and she, shortening sail, came under our lee, and no doubt made out a very good story as to what she was ; but the wind whistled so loudly and the sea broke with such violence, that I did not hear one word. To board her was impossible ; I therefore endeavoured to keep as close to her as I could during the night. We were on a lee shore, and could not afford to lose one inch of ground ; the pilot maintaining, that if I bore up in half an hour, we should be unable to fetch into Yarmouth, or to round Orford Ness.

The smuggler hove-to under our lee, and no doubt prepared for the manœuvre he was about to execute. He behaved like a good subject for two hours, during which time the *Asp* was kept to windward of him, as I considered it almost impossible for him to run his cargo in such a gale, and we had nothing but that rascally shore about Lowestoff to leeward of us : whereas, had he been to windward, he had only to make sail, and he would have been out of sight in half an hour. About two o'clock in the morning a thick heavy cloud began to rise, and to threaten a powerful squall. To leeward we had frequently remarked fires, which we had no doubt were signals to our little friend ; indeed he contrived to have something the matter on deck, and as she rolled to windward we saw one or two lights. At last, on came the squall : it rained like fury, and blew tremendously hard. Just before it burst, my friend had edged away, thinking we were too close to him ; and when the rain had obscured him altogether, he very wisely bore up and ran for the land. When the wind abated a little, we could just distinguish the smuggler running the risk of his life and vessel to land a few kegs of spirits. The pilot declared, that to follow was absolute madness, without I could make up my mind to lose the *Asp* and half the crew ; and so far from bearing up, he recommended me to endeavour to creep further off the land. As I did consider my own life certainly of as much value as the kegs of brandy ; and, as for so paltry a prize I did not consider myself authorised to lose the vessel and half the crew, I took the liberty of going to bed again, and allowing my friend to make the best use he could of his local knowledge and desperate courage to effect his purpose. We were afterwards told that he put his plan into execution ; that he ran his vessel on shore, just beneath the Lowestoff light-house ; that he succeeded in running his cargo, and only lost two lives and the vessel in the attempt.

Those smugglers are the most desperate fellows in the world. How any man can screw up his resolution to run his vessel on the boiling surf, the very roar of which is enough to frighten the stoutest heart, is perfectly incon-

ceivable; for the profit, however great, is drivelled out in small portions to the crew; and they risk their lives as much as the man who receives the lion's share. Some of our gallant boys, who were snug enough in Gillingham Reach, on board a large ship in a secure roadstead, seemed to think that we ought to have followed, run right alongside the smuggler on the same beach; and then, if we saved ourselves, to endeavour to save some of the property of the smugglers: but I should like to make the same answer to my solicitor when he makes my will, that I believe old Benbow made to his. On the lawyer expressing his surprise that the veteran admiral had so little to dispose of, he was answered in these words: "What little I got, I got honestly; it never cost a seaman a tear, or my country a farthing."

I was heartily glad to find an official letter, appointing me to the Arab, an eighteen-gun brig, at Plymouth; and I forthwith packed up my goods and chattels, and leaving the guard-ship, soon found myself on board my new ship. We were destined to the coast of Ireland; and after visiting the Admiral at Cork, repaired to the North Coast, our station being comprised between Achill Head and Fair Head. Our principal rendezvous was at Lough Swilly; in which beautiful anchorage we often found ourselves, either to refit, or to avoid a gale of wind outside. It is a formidable coast, and too much care cannot be taken to keep a good offing: in fact, I do not know a more dangerous cruising ground; the frequent gales, the heavy seas, the currents, the few harbours, and the rugged shore, render the North Coast of Ireland a very formidable station to guard well, and be yourselves secure.

It was in Ireland that I first felt the right meaning of the word hospitality: what we are pleased to call hospitality in England, is a very different thing from your real, generous, genuine hospitality in Ireland. I am willing to pass over descriptive scenery, because I feel I could not do justice to the beauty of Lough Swilly; neither will I venture to rave about the sweet daughters of Erin, for fear I should do, what I did then, fall in love with them all; but I propose to give an account of a scene descrip-

tive of the hospitality, and touching on some national customs ; and I shall now place my host in a masquerade dress and name, so as to defy detection. The reader will imagine me paying a morning's visit, but intending to sleep on shore, with a portmanteau, at an inn. Heavens ! what a difference between the first formal invitation to a dinner-party in England, and the warm cordial welcome of an Irishman ! no distant bows, no fashionable set, cold, and weighed speeches ; no inquiries if you are an elder son, or if you have a dozen brothers ; no scanning every feature, watching every motion ; and no full stops every second, in what is called conversation. No ; an Irishman in the neighbourhood of Buncrana, in Lough Swilly, seizing my hand with the true grasp of welcome, although he nearly jammed my fingers into a jelly, began, " Right glad to see you in Ireland, sir ; — Mrs. M'Carthy, — Biddy, my daughter, sir ; draw a chair, sir, and make yourself comfortable. You 're come, of course, to spend some time with us ? where 's your trunk ? "

I replied, that I intended to sleep on shore that night, and had left my portmanteau at Paddy M'Ginns, in Buncrana. " Oh, you have, have you ? then it 's not long there it will remain ; " — and out he walked. The room in which I found myself was a good-sized spacious apartment, rather ragged as to furniture, but warm and comfortable : by the side of the fire was a large box containing peat, which saved the eternal ringing of bells and bringing up servants ; who, anxious to catch any conversation to be retailed with additions below, keep sweeping the fenders and creating dust, annoying the company as much by their ears as by their hands. There was a pianoforte at the further end of the room ; and sofa, chairs, &c. made up the rest of the sum total.

Mrs. M'Carthy was about forty years of age, slim, and well-looking ; frank and open, like all Irishwomen, with a brilliant eye, and a fine row of teeth. Biddy was about seventeen, ripe and rosy ; a charming girl, with an excellent temper ; spirited, quick, and clever. The Irish girls are much nearer the French than the English school, saving that a French unmarried lady very seldom is very



conversable ; whereas an Irish spinster will spin the fine web of conversation most fluently and pleasantly : but Irish ladies do not consider marriage a mere matter of convenience, and like to be courted themselves, instead of being won through the cold formal proposition of the parents. I say nothing about virtue, because I cannot bring myself to believe that the French women are so very loose in their morals as they have been represented ; and Irish ladies are proverbial for their rectitude of conduct. " There now," said Mr. M'Carthy, as he entered the room, " there now, your trunk and yourself are housed, and we'll soon have dinner. — Biddy, my child, run and tell Laurence to be quick, for we are all starving to death here. — You're to stay a few days here, you know : you may stay a year if you like, but don't now be in a hurry to get back to that ship of yours, that keeps bobbing about like a boy on a see-saw : bad luck to me, if I would not just as soon live in a swing."

" Pardon me," I replied, " my visit must be short, because my leave is short ; besides which, I must go to Fawn, and see the bishop ; and, moreover, if I can, I must contrive to spend a few hours at Fort Stewart ; indeed, I ought to have gone there on my arrival ; but the view of Buncrana, the castle, the river, the bridge, the high lands and romantic scenery, made me visit this happy valley ; and it seems I shall require better wings than Imlac's before I clear myself of the hospitable abode."

" Please God," I overheard, " you shall be in such a state, that all the wings that ever flew would be of a very little use to you."

Dinner was served, if not so elegantly as in Grosvenor Square, much more comfortably and independently. The Irish are not the slaves of servants, or of fashion, at least in these remote parts. The rapidity of the jokes, the good-humour of the host, his wife, and daughter, wound my spirit up above concert pitch : however, I was well on my guard against striking a wrong *note*, and we accorded perfectly in sentiment, and had not during the evening a single bar to conviviality. In proper time the ladies withdrew, and, with the assistance of about six other

friends, who *accidentally* dropped in, I foresaw we should have a wet evening. Whisky-punch was placed on the table with large glasses, containing each a bulb, which held exactly as much as a wine-glass: when a toast was given, those who drank whisky filled these bulbs, and stopping the hole at the extremity of the tube, so as to prevent the admission of air, conveyed the contents in safety from the tumbler to the wine-glass, then withdrawing the finger, left the latter a bumper. Claret was plentiful, and it was quite optional what you drank, as long as you drank something.

“Pardon me, Mr. F.,” said Mr. M‘Carthy, “I dare say we shan’t have much more than thirty or forty toasts to-night; so that we had better begin. We have always *one* toast here, and, please God, we’ll drink it directly. Gentlemen — ‘The glorious memory:’ — every man must repeat the words, or pay the usual fine of drinking a bumper until he shall repeat it correctly. Are you charged all of you now? — Here is, ‘The glorious, pious, and immortal memory of the great and good king William, who kept us from popery, slavery, brass money, wooden shoes, and peas in our brogues! May he who would not drink this toast be in the pope’s belly, the pope in the devil’s belly, the devil in hell, hell in flames, the gates locked, the keys in the Protestants’ pockets;’ and that (snapping his fingers) for the bishop of Cork.”

I had very fortunately learnt the words of the toast before, and repeated it correctly; whereupon I was voted a real, staunch Orangeman, and a strenuous upholder of the Protestant ascendancy in Church and State. This unfortunate virulent spirit, which still exists in the north, will always be a bar to the operations of the great healing measure; how can such people agree? — the one, who teaches his child from his earliest infancy to hate a Protestant as he does the devil himself, and who, in the grammar put into his child’s hand, has the pleasant assurance, that an injury done to the heretic is praiseworthy in the eyes of God — and the other, who every day after dinner would as soon omit his usual hospitality as omit that toast, which expresses in words not possible to be

misunderstood, the consignment of all Catholics, in a lump, to the hot fires of the infernal regions: just as well may you attempt to mix oil and water, as soothe the animosity of the existing generation. The school-system may effect something; but time, and a long time too, is requisite to make Protestant and Catholic really friends, and forget past grievances. Nothing has done more mischief than the daily repetition of this objectionable toast; it is unchristian from beginning to end, and only serves two very bad purposes, "to make your enemies hate you the more, and to make your friends drunk."

It produced the last upon me. I found all means of retreat quite cut off; and I shortly saw I was doomed to be made an example, I hope, to deter others from imitating my brutality. I soon began to feel myself relieved from the cares of this world, to be excessively knowing, to have about a thousand ideas, and not to be able to pronounce one; the room gradually appeared to grow larger, the candles and the company to multiply, and, after believing myself a much greater man than either Nelson or Wellington, I gave, as Lord Byron says, of the sinking ship,

A heel to starboard, then to port,  
And going down head foremost, sunk — in short,

under the table. What became of me or mine I know not — but when daylight dawned, I found myself hot and feverish, in a pretty fair bed, with any thing else but a head upon my shoulders. I was rolled up in a sheet, with my clothes on, my head enveloped in a lady's night-cap; a table with tobacco-pipes and whisky thereon stood near the foot, underneath which snorted, in a loud snore, one of the bottle-companions — whilst a shoe or two belonging to neither of us (for both of us had ours on) convinced me that the room had been a scene of some meeting, which, for the soul of me, I could not recollect. The operations of the toilet restored me a little to my usual looks, but my head seemed split, and ached to a sickening degree: my hand trembled like a magnetic needle, and my face was as white as a turnip.

On entering the breakfast-room, I found the ladies assembled. Biddy, after a hearty welcome inquired how I

had slept ; and Mrs. M'Carthy hoped I had found the bed comfortable : there was an evident smile upon each of their countenances, and from the sly way the questions were put, I argued that there was some mystery about the lady's night-cap. Shortly after a little bantering conversation, in came Mr. M'Carthy, looking as fresh and as ruddy as ever ; a little wild about the eye to be sure, but his hand as steady as a die : when he gave me the cordial grasp of friendship, he looked full in my face, and, bursting out into a loud shout of laughter, began — “ By my soul I congratulate you — indeed I do, my boy — on your resurrection, for when you were dead last night, we *waked* you : there's nothing like getting used to these things, for, one of these fine days, if you die hereabouts, they'll wake you for the last time, do you see.” If Mr. M'Carthy had amused himself reading a Persian poem in the original, he could not have puzzled me more than he did by his remark.

“ What do you mean,” said I, “ by waking me ? ”

“ Oh, now,” he cried, “ did you never see a wake ? Well, but that's droll enough ; and as you are here for *a month*, as you promised last night, you'll be out of luck if somebody does not die ; but if that poor spalpeen of a tailor, who has been cheating the devil the whole winter, does not treat us to a wake before a fortnight, there's no smuggled tobacco in Derry. Oh, Biddy, now, did he not look a handsome corpse in your night-cap ? and he laid as stiff and as still as a pitchfork.”

This was very pleasant for me to hear — more especially as I found all hands had taken an active part in the play, and that Mr. M'Carthy, his wife, and daughter, with the company, had been good enough to howl over me. As I understood that I had cut a very respectable figure, I was very anxious to see a wake upon some real subject : and Mr. M'Carthy, being a good prophet, shortly communicated to me that Paddy M'Skimming had departed this life, and was to be waked in all due form the next night : he gave me, at the same time, to understand that I could go in uninvited, and had only to do as I saw others do ; he regretted he was obliged to go to Inch Island, where

he had some business to transact; and finished by advising me on no account to miss the scene.

About nine o'clock the next night, myself and a companion repaired to the dead man's cabin, and walked in, making a low bow as we entered, and in silence took our seats at the foot of the bed. In a small adjoining room were some singers, who sung some parts of the Catholic service, and whose voices harmonised uncommonly well. The curtains had been clean washed, and looked as white as snow, when contrasted with the dirty walls of the interior. On the bed were two pretty girls, of about seventeen or eighteen, sitting pensively enough, but not weeping; and between them and us was a small round table with three candles on it, a plate filled with tobacco, and some common tobacco-pipes. On the right hand side of the fire were a number of seats placed in close rows, on which were about a dozen men all smoking in silence, with a vacant stare on their countenances, but certainly not overwhelmed with grief at their friend's loss. Between the fire-place and the bed sat an old woman of about seventy: she was seated on the floor, her head bent forward towards her knees, and covered by her hands; she kept muttering and mumbling something; and every now and then held herself upright, while she made the sign of the cross. The musicians stopped to take breath, and a dead silence ensued: the scene presented an uncouth union of the awful and the ridiculous: the girls never moved, but kept their folded hands on their lips, and the men appeared a set of smoking automats. It reminded me of Knickerbocker's account of New York, where in the minute of the Dutch council, he says, "The council met to-day and smoked their pipes." I began to think I should have much about the same story to relate.

After this had gone on for about a quarter of an hour, one of the Irishmen near the fire said in the broadest language — "M'Sheen, I'll wager you a five-penny, now, that the young man by the table will send for some whisky."

"Indeed, and you won't now," retorted the other, "for to be sure and he will."

I took the hint, and, holding out five shillings, said, "Who will go and buy it?" I had not to ask that twice; the man nearest to me got up, and taking the money, shortly returned with enough Innishowen to make all the party drunk. My companion, however, who seemed to know that no fun would commence until the wakers were drunk, sent out for some more, and both jugs were placed on the table. There seemed to be a vast deal of ceremony about moving, for every now and then one of the party would say, "May I trouble your honour just to fill this pipe for me again?" where, if he had got up and advanced one step, he could have done it himself. The same thing occurred with regard to the whisky; and as I had placed myself near the table, I had enough occupation.

As this smoking and drinking did not come up to my idea of the treatment I had received, I resolved to put a good face on the matter, and to interrogate the girls as to the probable finale of the business, and where they had stowed Mr. McSkimming; for although I was given to understand I was in the chamber of death, yet no corpse could I find out by any accident. I made three or four false starts, before I mustered up courage to break the silence. As I advanced towards the bed, the old woman, as if she had been a watch-dog alarmed, soon was upright, and advanced a pace to meet me. It occurred to me that I had much better get my information from rosy lips, than from those of age; for the former can always be complimented into good-humour, but no one has patience and perseverance enough to tell lies to a woman of seventy. "My pretty girl," said I to the eldest—and in good truth this was no compliment—"may I take the liberty of asking for what we are all assembled here?"

"To wake my father, please your honour: he went dead yesterday evening—bad luck to the hour!"

"Well," said I, endeavouring to philosophise my Irish beauty into the necessity of bearing even the loss of a father with fortitude; "it is no doubt a heavy blow, and a great misfortune; but we must bear up against that which is inevitable. Tell me, my pretty girl, are all these gentlemen your friends?"

"They're all kind enough, sir, just to come and smoke, and drink, and wake my father."

"If your father is only asleep," quoth I, "their silence will never awake him."

"Oh, but you'll have noise enough soon!" she replied; "be asy a minute or two."

"Well, but," I continued, "what is the use of the noise, if the dead man is so far off that he cannot have a chance of hearing it? Where," said I, continuing, "where is your father, my little beauty?"

"Where should he be," she replied, "but here, to be sure, in this very bed?"

"What!" I replied, "on the bed that you are sitting upon!"

"Yes, sure enough he's here," said the old lady, "and you shall see him with your own eyes;" then turning to the company, she said, "We are just going to uncover the face; be dacent, and behave yourselves."

The two daughters by this time had left the bed; and there I saw the figure of the corpse, and stood awaiting the result. I had got into a scrape from my curiosity, and as I always did, and always intend to do, I took my chance for some opportunity occurring to extricate myself. In the mean time, all the people in the room stood up with their faces towards the bed: not a single breath was audible; the pipes were neglected, and all eyes were riveted upon the corpse, by the side of which I was standing. Near me, but more towards the pillow, was the old woman; and in the place where she had been sitting, stood the two daughters, with their heads bent forward, and holding the two ends of a pocket-handkerchief, kept waving it in the air in gentle motion. When the old lady withdrew the sheet, the whole company bowed their heads, and remained in the position Catholics are generally seen in when the host is elevated. When the head was fairly exposed, the good old soul, whom I had long ago consigned to the infernal regions in my own heart for having got me into such a very awkward predicament, turned her eyes, and, looking me full in the face, said, "He's here!" — "And," said I, with a mighty composed look and expres-

sion, "a very handsome corpse he is." — "That's true every word of it," said she: but she still held the sheet down, and I fancied some other remark was expected.

"How old was the good man before he left you?" I asked.

"Seventy years and four days," was the answer.

"We must all die," I observed; but it is not every one who is so respected, and who has so many friends as I see here, to come and honour his death."

"That's true," said she. "Oh, but he was a dear good creature, a right good creature, a handsome creature, and you're a good man to come and see the last of him. Oh, Paddy, Paddy, why did you die—why did you die?" Here she leant over the dead, and imprinted a feeling kiss upon the stony features; then turning to me, she seized me, and kissed me: by heavens, I never remember such a cold shudder as then agitated my frame! I thought I smelt the dead upon her lips, and I shrunk from her hands in a cold and clammy trepidation: she looked at me again, and then at the corpse, the face of which she cautiously covered; and again repeating, "Why did you die, Pat—why did you die?" she gave a kind of nondescript howl, which was taken up by the company, who joined in the low and melancholy moan; a kind of acquiescence in the loss they had experienced. The daughters again were seated on the bed; the old woman betook herself to her corner; the company began to smoke; conversation soon became audible; and I, as the scene had closed, resolved to gratify my curiosity in some other respects; I therefore continued by the bed-side, and asked the daughters, "Why, when the corpse was uncovered, they waved their pocket-handkerchiefs?" for I had been struck by the resemblance between Bruce's description of the Abyssinians on this point, and the same occurrence in an Irish hut. She knew not, poor little soul; she only knew it was the custom; and she had been told she was to do it.

A very different scene, the *finale* of the serio-comic opera, was in preparation. Whisky, not having had the dip-stick in it, as they call the exciseman's gauge, is powerful stuff, and quick in its operations. From a gentle



undulating sound, when the first low conversation commences, it had grown into loud talking, with some vehement gesticulations; and as they had fallen back into their own jargon, I understood very little or none of the arguments: it was evident we formed the subject of it, for the eyes of the speakers were constantly directed towards us; however, as we were peaceable men, I did not anticipate any rudeness, and I was right.

In half an hour's time all was confusion; the benches were upset; all hands were talking at once; the pipes were smashed; the girls had retired into the small room, and all solemnity was banished — the only recollection of which was the old woman, who still sat in the corner, huddled up like a bag of dirty clothes. I began to mingle in the crowd, for I was resolved to have a good howl, and wake my friend if it was possible; not but there was quite sufficient noise at that moment to have startled any sound sleeper. I soon got on most friendly terms with all my society; and, after praising old Ireland, and joining in a chorus or two, I requested that we might have one good proper north-of-Ireland howl: it was forthwith assented to, and the party moved a little nearer the body. They did give a howl! — in all my life I never heard any thing like it, before or since; it was sustained for a few minutes, and then gradually grew fainter and fainter, until it ceased. I shortly after this edged gently towards the door, through which I took the liberty of stepping, and retired to bed before the quarreling had ripened into a row. The next morning, we heard that the sticks had been in great requisition, and that Mr. M'Skimming had had a most excellent and proper wake.

In the Arab, we were not very nice as to remaining on our station: every now and then we contrived to make the Mull of Cantyre, and slip, for a day or two, into the snug harbour of Camel-town; but our principal anchorage, when we transgressed our bounds, was in Islay Bay. The service did not suffer in the least by these little flights; our station was guarded by three revenue cutters, and we were useful, if merely to show the smuggling inhabitants, that we might come when least expected; but before I

enter upon Scotland, I must give a slight account of a wreck.

When the Arab was undergoing some trifling refit in Lough Swilly, I solicited, and not in vain, for leave from the captain to visit Staffa; and immediately obtained the consent of an old friend of mine to embark on board his yacht, and forthwith to proceed. This yacht was a small cutter, admirably adapted for smooth-water sailing, but by no means very manageable in a head sea and stiff breeze; she was altogether too short and too sharp. After purchasing provisions for a week, and making every thing snug on board, we got under weigh, and proceeded to our destination. It had been previously agreed between the owner and myself, that when in a loch, or in any harbour, he should have the command of his own vessel, but that the navigation of the cutter, and the entire management of her at sea, should be under my superintendence and directions. We were the best friends imaginable, and many's the happy day we had spent together in Londonderry or on Inch Island, or near Letterkenny; many's the time we had drank "the glorious memory," and many a speech I had made to forward his election for the county.

Scarcely had we cleared Dunaff Head, and opened the island of Insterhole, when the breeze began to freshen, and the little sloop to dip her bows in the sea — very detrimental to her progress, and equally so to unquiet bowels. As I saw that we could not fetch either to windward of the island, or with any security attempt to beat through the passage, I advised my companion to bear up for a small harbour to leeward, very little frequented by any vessels, and certainly very dangerous to enter: the fact was, that a gale of wind was inevitable; the cutter was then under close-reefed mainsail and spitfire jib, pitching and tossing, and rolling like a dismasted collier, drifting on a lee shore fast. It being extremely doubtful if we could have weathered Dunaff Head and run again into Lough Swilly, we had only a choice of difficulties — either to attempt the latter, and if we failed, we should have been lost, or to make a bold advance, and try the small harbour: the latter was agreed to, and we bore up at sun-

set. The sun was going down upon a thick bank, and the clouds, as they flew over our heads, indicated too clearly the approaching gale. We had one of the Admiralty charts on board, and I resolved to pilot the sloop in, by following the directions there laid down; although it was evident, from the insignificancy of the creek, that it had never been the object of a very attentive survey.

The boats used by the fishermen could not get out, for the breakers were heavy, and the tide was running in so strong that they never dreamt of attempting it. I found all bearings perfectly useless, the harbour's mouth was so narrow; the sea broke in all the fury of a long Atlantic swell upon the coast, and the white foam flew over the cliff. I confess that I felt a very awkward tremor, as the little vessel drew towards the shore; and gladly would I have tried another tack, had we not been so far to leeward as to render the hauling on a wind actual madness. I had got the harbour's mouth well open, and desired the helmsman to steer right for the centre; the surf appeared to break across, and I confess I had very little hope of hitting the passage between the rocks, it not being broader than the vessel's length. It was a great deal more by good luck than good management, that we passed the dangers, and anchored in safety.

The good people on the coast, who had lined the beach, seemed excessively mortified at being balked of their prey; for they considered our loss as inevitable, and had counted upon the plunder as the just reward for saving our lives; they had their boats ready, and certainly I do believe the fishermen of Strabagy Bay would not have seen us perish without some attempt at relief. Their first question when they came on board was, "Who is the pilot amongst you?" and when I was pointed out, they passed me in close review order, and all declared they had never seen me before; and certainly it was much against my will that they saw me at all. They said that we should never get out again, and seemed to think our entrance a miracle: this I cared very little about; it was evident there *was* a passage, and I felt assured that I could get out of the place, if such a passage at any time of tide existed.

We were a little alarmed by one of these wild gentlemen taking the liberty of stealing a duck which was roasting before the fire, and making an attempt to be off with the prize; the cook, however, stopped his retreat, and, after a slight disposition on the part of his comrades to assist the plunderer, we recovered our dinner. It was with very great difficulty we got rid of these intruders, and were left to ourselves. Some of the crew (we had six in all) maintained that they were under no apprehension as to being wrecked, for that they had some of the wood of the true cross on board; and it was an undeniable fact, that no person had ever lost his life, who carried some of this inestimable treasure about his person.

The wind during the night increased into a regular N. W. gale; the surf roared outside of us, and the cables of the little yacht seemed stretched to their utmost. We had now more to fear from the inhabitants than from the elements; and our night, which was stormy and rainy, was not one of repose or security. Three days were we locked in this miserable place; the fourth, however, brought with it a change of wind; the sea lulled, and we began to make preparations for getting under weigh at the half-flood. Whilst we were actively employed in getting the mainsail up, the servant, who had just cleared the breakfast-table, came on deck, and threw the crumbs and the egg-shells overboard; two of the latter sunk, and two floated. This attracted the notice of my companion, who, calling out to me, remarked, that "I had done a pretty trick, having omitted to run my spoon through the bottom of the egg-shells, and that the fairies would use them for boats, and play us some fatal prank."

The egg-shells had now drifted some distance up the river, or I verily believe he would have sent the boat to stop the fairies' freaks, by sinking their tiny ships: of course I never heeded the remark, except by saying, that it appeared quite immaterial to the witches what kind of vessels they had, for some of them sailed in sieves, which must be leaky enough in all conscience. To my very great astonishment (for I considered it a random remark, without any meaning attached to it), one or

two of the crew manifested considerable uneasiness, and prognosticated some misfortune as not far distant. This, however, I set to rights by asking after their faith in the true cross. We got under weigh, and, with the assistance of the boat, safely piloted the vessel to sea, and stood between the island and the main, the passage of which we cleared by seven o'clock in the evening. I now recommended standing across the Turbot Bank, and shaping a direct course to Staffa, at which island I made sure we should arrive the following day.

Now came a regular mutiny :—my companion, who had seen his vessel under close-reefed sails, for once in his life did not relish the idea of crossing the bank, on which he maintained there was always a heavy sea. I had crossed it fifty times in the Arab, and ridiculed what I knew to be an error. Nothing, however, would convince him, and he rather sharply said it was his yacht, and he would go where he liked. To this I agreed ; telling him at the same time, he might pilot himself, *if he could*. This was merely answered by a determination to go into Loch Foyle for the night, and to start again the next day ; and, as we could see Innishowen Head at that time, the man at the helm was desired to steer right for it ; thus cutting across Coldaff Bay. The night was excessively fine, with a light steady breeze ; the cutter was slipping along about three knots an hour ; and, as I was rather fatigued, I betook myself to bed, where I soon fell asleep, for I knew we could not get into any mischief by the course we were steering, at any rate for some time. Meanwhile the breeze gradually freshened ; and, as the sea was smooth, the yacht began to splash through the water at an accelerated pace. The headland of Innishowen was soon neared ; and when the entrance into Loch Foyle was opened, my companion bore up for the harbour. Here, however, there was a good deal of sea ; for it was an ebb-tide, running against the wind, which, consequently, created no small confusion of waters. It was in this bubble that a sea washed over the quarter, and came down in rather uncomfortable quantities into the cabin. This awoke me, for I had never anticipated such an intruder. As I had

my clothes on, having turned in "all standing," like a trooper's horse, I was on deck in a second. The sea was breaking upon the quarters of the yacht, and the night seemed entirely changed. The high land of Innishowen seemed looking over the vessel, and she surged through the sea at a good pace.

Now it so happens, that the entrance into Loch Foyle is protected from the sea by a ridge of rocks, called, I think, "the Tons," and which lie exactly in the centre of the passage; these again are flanked by another ledge, which is on the Innishowen side of them; and we were, I could perceive, in a very perilous situation. My companion, seeing my alarm on my sudden appearance, began his conversation thus:—

"Bravo. F——, washed out of your den, eh! — Come along, my lad, to supper; I have just ordered some lobsters and wine — we shall be in the loch in a minute."

"Not quite," I replied, "why S——, you are very near the land here, and close upon the rocks!"

"The devil a rock in the whole seas!" said the helmsman, who had voted himself into a pilot, although it afterwards appeared he had never been near the place before in his life.

"Oh, never fear, my naval officer!" retorted my companion, "we are snug enough now, and Larry will steer us in without a touch."

"It's just myself, now, who can do it," said Larry, looking as knowingly to windward as pointer dogs when they smell the land.

"Larry, or no Larry," I called out, "we are close on board the rocks, for there they break, right under the bows: hard a-starboard, or we are on them."

"Hard a-starboard!" called out my companion. "Larry, you rascal, you; hard a-starboard, and be cursed to you!"

Larry's courage deserted him in a moment; he first put the helm a-port, and, on my roaring out, "the other way!" the mainsail jibbed, and stopped the operation, Larry having bobbed his head to avoid the boom. The vessel instantly broached to, almost tearing the mast out

by the jerk of the jib. When the helm was put a star-board, and the crew came aft to shorten in the main-sheet to jib the sail properly, as the wind came right astern, the yacht struck upon a rock, and bundled all hands forward, from the momentary stop; away went the boom against the after-swifter, and away went the courage of the crew.

“Oh, save us, your honour! save us!—bad luck to the rocks! we’ve hit ’em exactly. Oh, save us like a good Christian, do, your honour!”

My companion, who was as brave as a lion, only remarked, “Curse those infernal egg-shells! I knew right well those fairies would *confuse* us.” There was a very unwholesome sea running; and the vessel, being fixed firmly on the rock, offered the stern as the resisting part. The second breaker tore the boat from that situation, and smashed her to atoms, washing fore and aft over the deck. I desired the mainsails to be lowered, and the headsails kept up: for as the last sea washed us further on, our only chance was, being washed over the ledge, in which case I could have run her on shore before she sank. Instead of doing what I desired, they did exactly the reverse; they hauled the head-sails down, and left the main-sail against the shrouds of the mast. One of the men who went below for a light, to show as a signal of distress, called out, after a couple of “holy murders,”—“the craft’s going down to the bottom, for she’s half full of water.” This intelligence put confusion at its height: one man knelt down, and kissed a crucifix: another rummaged his pockets for the wood; but none would obey orders. As I had foreseen, the fourth or fifth sea washed us over the ledge, and the mainsail being up, she rounded short to, on getting clear, and struck again. The noise of our clamorous crew had been heard on shore, and we saw certain assistance and robbery not far distant; again we surged from the rock, and got sternway, luckily, towards the shore. The boat had just time to receive our crew, when the poor little yacht, which had been gradually settling, sunk, almost under our feet, and, with her, sunk every thing but my portmanteau. She was

afterwards weighed, patched up, and did get safe home again.

In this anecdote, is a very wholesome little moral, which I recommend to the especial attention of the Yacht Club:—"Never believe yourself a proficient in any art, until you have practised that art in all its different bearings, and in every possible way."

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

IN consequence of one of our men, when we were last at Islay, having forgotten the difference between the *meum* and *tuum*, and appropriated to his own use sundry watches, purses, &c., we were ordered to Inverary for the sessions, and soon sailed up that beautiful romantic loch. If there is a scene of enchantment in this globe, it is here. All the poetry, all the novel-writing in the world can never give even a faint idea of a sunset in Loch Fyne; therefore I shall not dip in the deep waters of description—but merely say, that those travellers who get as far as Glasgow, and omit seeing Inverary, are about as much to be ridiculed as the man who goes to Rome and does not see the Pope.

It was an unfortunate affair this robbery, for it was a great breach of hospitality as well as of honesty. The following celebration gave the thief an opportunity of practising his art; and will convey to the reader the truth of the remark in the preface to this work, that almost all kinds of scenes pass under the eye of a sailor. We were not very snug—for it is an open bay in Islay: we anchored on a Sunday morning, and seeing crowds of people going to "the kirk," we thought we might as well join the congregation, and benefit by the discourse; our muster at divisions, however, detained us until it would have been indecorous to intrude in the small kirk of such a place as Islay; and our uniforms would have attracted more attention amongst the poorer classes, than would have been



proper in us to have caused, or they to have practised. We therefore wandered about the village until the service was concluded, and then placed ourselves in a good situation to be seen and to see.

There were only two equipages near the kirk — one a handsome phaeton and the other an open carriage; and these we rightly concluded belonged to the great proprietors of this heather-covered island. A young man of fashionable exterior fixed his eyes upon me, and, advancing in a friendly manner, said, “F——, I am sure I am right—what brings you to my island?” At first I did not remember him, but he shortly made himself known to me, and I recollected him well at school,—it was the Laird of Islay. It is quite useless to say, we were received with warm genuine hospitality, and were forthwith conducted to what he called the first inn in the place; it had several advantages over an inn: we could call for what we wanted, and were sure to obtain the article; and did not find, like Hajji Baba, that the eternal bill followed the request. It was a house of hospitality in the most extended sense of the word — never could more luxuries be offered with a more willing hand; in fact it was, what is very rarely found, a place of welcome. The house stands at the bottom of a long bay, and commands a capital view of the roadstead: we therefore had the ship under our eye, and were ready to embark in a moment.

A week afterwards, the laird was to celebrate his coming of age and taking possession of his new property: on this occasion all his tenants were invited to a feast, and some of our men joined in the pleasures of the day. It was a beautiful sight. On the lawn, near the house, several tents were erected, in which were placed wholesome comestibles — not your French cookery, which disguises a cat so completely, that no man could tell his friend puss, in its rich vesture — but rounds of beef, turkeys, hams and such like astounding evidence of the plenty of the country. To these tents the tenants were conducted, with the exception of some of the principal landholders, who dined with us afterwards, and who came within the strict line of right, in point of society. That ample justice was

done to the feast, I can attest : there were merry and contented faces — no grovelling servile looks — all seemed to feel they were portions of a large family, at the head of which was the laird — all seemed to feel they were men — and useful men in that state of life to which it had pleased God to call them.

Our cosmopolites, the sailors, who considered that “it was all fish that came to their net,” soon brought on a state of conviviality; and songs, such as have often charmed the seaman in his rough passage through the ocean of life, got as much praise from the smiling damsels, as they had before met with from the rough crew, when they crouched under the forecastle-bulwark, and beat the noise of the wind by the roar of their chorus.

About three o'clock the laird desired his tenants to meet him on the lawn, and to drink a bumper to the king's health : they were formed in a square, in the centre of which was a cask, and all the aristocratic part of the company. On this cask stood the laird, and well did he look his station : — he was young, handsome, well-formed, with a bright eye and a benevolent countenance : his speech was short, but much to the point ; it embraced a few topics — such as his delight at finding himself surrounded by such a tenantry ; and his pride in the growing prosperity of the island. It had been purchased, I believe, for 10,500*l.* by his father, and returned the young laird about 1500*l.* a year. He spoke with affectionate kindness of his happiness in relieving the distressed ; and finished by declaring his intention to use his utmost endeavours to promote his tenants' prosperity — his determination to shake them all by the hand, and to show his gratitude to the country, under the laws of which his property was protected, by drinking the health of his king. This was well received, for it went home to the feelings of all present ; and each man, as he drained his glass of unadulterated whisky, reversed it, to show he had done honour to the toast.

The laird then began to walk round and converse with every one separately ; — it was playing king upon a small scale. Most of the rugged Highlanders, whose frank countenances bespoke the sincerity of their hearts, as they

grasped the young laird's hand, begged he would take a drop from their glasses — each man having his own filled as Islay approached him, and each, as the conversation terminated, drinking his health and future happiness. Many could not drink a drop until he had first wetted his lips ; and had he not been prudent, he must have been in a very royal state, long before he had completed one side of the square. In this particular part of the business, I mainly assisted in relieving him : the ceremony was not concluded until six o'clock.

When the piper announced the dinner, we assembled round the table, while the tenants dozed off some of the consequences of the copious libations. The piper (Lord, how I hate a piper ! ) blew away during the dinner ; it would have been a high insult to dispense with this daily infliction under any circumstances : he walked up and down before the windows — puffed out “ The Campbells are coming,” and a thousand other Highland songs, excessively prized by the natives, but discordant beyond all conception to the Southern visiter. The eternal squeak stopped all conversation, or at any rate embarrassed it — and certainly that which is called music by some, may safely be called windy recreation by others. This valuable appendage to a Scotch laird walked up and down by the door of every bed-room in the house, at eight o'clock, and squeaked out his shrill pipe, disturbing slumber — not easily obtained, and not very long enjoyed.

Our dinner was jovial enough : many were the toasts given in rapid succession ; and there appeared, what I am sure was sincere, a general wish for the young laird's prosperity. About nine, it was announced that the ball would be immediately commenced : so, finishing our last bumpers, we repaired to the barn, in which were congregated all the females, one might suppose, of the island ; for, with the exception of one small part of Islay, which belonged to his uncle, of Sunderland, every inch of the territory was the young laird's. He selected a very nice lassie, and stepped it merrily in a Highland reel ; it was followed by a reel of Highlanders, which certainly gave me a correct idea of that dance, and the Highland fling.

Their agility and activity surpassed my most sanguine expectations ; they kicked their feet about in a style which would embarrass a French dancer ; and every now and then the stamp of the foot, the clap of the hand, and the voice, added to the noise of the double shuffle and twirl. This was well contrasted with the opera step of one of our officers, who had been much in France, and who danced very gracefully : he was sliding through the reel with turned-out toe, and steady body, unbent knee, and still arm — one was all animation and fire, the other all ease and elegance. It had a very good effect ; and amongst those who were sober enough to see a hole through a grating, it gave rise to much comment on nationality.

Whilst we were thus footing it merrily in the barn, the devil whispered into one of our men's ears, that the house was perfectly deserted, and that he might resume his juvenile avocations without fear of detection. The devil was right in one respect, but wrong in the other. The thief found the house untenanted ; I believe the cook was dancing, and I know, Gio, the Italian servant, was whispering his broken English into the ears of a sandy-haired daughter of the North. It appeared the dishonest sailor roamed through all the rooms, and, after weighing probabilities of detection, against a profitable seizure, the imp of avarice, which tempted him to break through the laws of hospitality, and to violate every sacred right, prompted him to take a handsome watch, which, I believe, was more valuable from its being an old family recorder of time, than for its curious worked case, or splendid appearance. To this the thief added some few stray coins — and thus, full of plunder, he joined the dance, and finished his unmanly evening, by getting as drunk as the rest of the company, and sleeping in the barn until the boat in the morning conveyed him and his plunder on board.

It was soon rumoured, the next day, that the laird had been robbed during the evening festivities : there was no doubt of the time, because he remembered, when he went to dress, seeing the watch on his table. Such a breach of hospitality excited the generous indignation of the Highlanders ; and many were the inquiries if the thief

had been detected. Amongst themselves, they acquitted each other of so dishonourable an intention ; it never occurred to them that by accident they might have a villain amongst them, who would so far outstep the laws of honour, as to have been guilty of so base an act — and, in speaking of the event, they confidently asked if the *English* thief had been detected. However highly we prized the generous straightforward manner of the Highlanders, we by no means relished this wholesale national insult ; and we had just as much confidence in the character of the *English* sailor, as the islanders had in their companions. A very rigid search was instituted fore and aft ; the bags were turned inside out — every shirt, stocking, pocket, and tobacco-box in the ship were overhauled — every man who was on shore that night was slightly accused — every moment required to be accounted for ; and, in short, all the ingenuity of the first-lieutenant, who was a very sharp clever fellow, put in force to discover the offender.

We now began to hold up our heads, and to venture an opinion, that, by an accident in nature, a dishonest Highlander might have been born on the island of Islay : the very idea was scouted, and the rough man of the heath-covered mountains quite ridiculed such a notion, “Aweel, aweel, you’ll no go far to sea, without finding the watch.” I am free to confess, I, for one, began to think so plain a statement very derogatory to the nation at large ; and had I been able to face one of these gentlemen, who was employed “pitching a bar” about the size of a small tree, which he balanced and turned in the air, with the apparent ease that I should a walking-stick, it is more than probable we might have stood forward to avenge our national insult. But independently of having seen this pitching the bar, I had seen my friend play at “Put :” this game consists in holding a large stone balanced in the right hand, and then throwing it ; the man who “puts” it the furthest, winning the stakes, and being acknowledged the strongest man. The Highlanders, who practise the game early in youth, and who thus strengthen the muscles of the arm, from eternal prac-

tice become most powerful people in any manual exercise, and lift weights quite beyond an English gentleman's comprehension. I could not with both hands, and I am not a very weak man, even stir the stone which these youths were playing with ; and therefore I leave the reader to judge if " the better part of valour is not discretion."

For the honour and glory of the Arab's crew, be it recorded, that they keenly felt the insult, and resolved to fathom its truth. Amongst themselves they looked up the characters of the men who had been on shore that night, and the subsequent conversation of each. Suspicion fell on one of the main-top-men, who was seen going into the cable-tier once or twice ; a search was instituted, and between two of the beams the watch and money were discovered. When this was announced, it excited no words of contempt, no expressions of surprise ; the Highlanders never noticed it, for they considered it as a matter of course ; and would perhaps have been cruelly mortified, had we sailed without making the discovery. They felt just as certain that we had the thief, as they did of their own existence : the only surprise I heard expressed was, that we had not found him out before. It was resolved to hand the thief over to the civil power ; and we were directed to attend the trial, which was to take place at Inverary. This affair accounts for our visiting Loch Fyne. We attended the trial, and the man was sentenced to transportation.

At the post-office of the little village which stands near the lodge-gate of the Duke of Argyle's splendid talc-built castle, I found an official letter, desiring me to repair to Plymouth in any manner I thought best, and there to join the *Lee*. I never in all my life received a piece of intelligence with half the feeling of regret that I did this. To say we were comfortable in the Arab, is not doing justice to Captain Simeon. Never were men better assorted to make each other comfortable. We had every luxury on board that money could procure ; we did our duty cheerfully together ; and, when the day's work was ended, we enjoyed our society either on shore or on

board, and spent our lives without murmur and without discontent. I have never been in a ship which gave me a good idea of what might be done to insure contentment on board of an eighteen-gun brig, where the accommodations are small, the society mixed, and the work hard, like the Arab; and very vainly did I endeavour in after-life to make ships under my command equally efficient and equally comfortable. I left her with regret; and when shortly afterwards she was lost, and every man and boy perished — no one knows how — it gave me the sincerest pleasure to find that all the officers had been changed. Much as we must all regret the untimely loss of so many brave men, over whose fate the ocean of uncertainty still rolls, yet was it gratifying to find that none of those who shared my friendship, and with whom I had been so long acquainted, added to the melancholy account in this disastrous occurrence. It was reported that the Arab had been seen, under a crowd of canvas, in chase of a smuggler; but all that was ever known of her loss was, that such an event had happened; that some hats and musical instruments had been picked up, the former having the ship's name on them; and that a spar or two, the tell-tales of shipwrecks, had floated near the Island of Arranmore. I can very easily pardon the reader who wishes I had not been superseded, as he might have been spared some scenes of woe in another climate.

I left my abode of comfort and embarked on board the steam-boat, which gave me a good opportunity of seeing the Clyde, and was landed at Greenock. From here I paid a visit to Loch Lomond, and afterwards steamed it to Glasgow. I shortly afterwards removed to Edinburgh; and, after making various tours and detours, I embarked on board a Leith smack, and, with barely enough money to pay my passage, got safe to Greenwich, where I disembarked, and proceeded home. I arrived at about half-past eleven at night. The door was opened by a stranger to me, who seemed rather astonished at the cool manner I took possession.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said he, "but missis is gone to bed, and master is undressing."

"Very likely, and very proper," I replied, "and I shall follow their example. Tell the housemaid to get a bed ready immediately, and take my portmanteau up stairs."

It so happened that my mother was just going to bed, and, hearing the conversation, asked, over the banisters, what was the matter. The butler replied, that "a *strange* gentleman said he was going to sleep in the house, and wanted his bed prepared." I must mention that, at this period, the nation had been alarmed by the numerous murders and robberies committed by Irish servants, or, at any rate, if not committed by them, the poor Irish bore the blame; and as, from my residence in Ireland, I had, like any other mocking-bird, picked up a little of the brogue, the butler concluded his answer by saying "he thought I was an Irish gentleman." No straw ever ignited quicker, when a flambeau and a strong breeze came in contact, than did my mother's apprehension. "Turn him out immediately, I desire," she said; "we shall all be murdered in our beds! — Ring the bell, Nanny, and call the rest of the servants! — Do you hear, Roberts? — turn him out!"

I could not help laughing at the consternation occasioned by one whose arrival had always been hailed with joy and affection: so I told the butler, while I rummaged my pockets to pay for the hackney-coach, to say who I was, and that really and truly I was my mother's own son. This confirmed her worst apprehensions. "It is quite impossible," she said; "he is in Ireland! I desire, Mr. Roberts, you turn him out of the house, and shut the door immediately." In the mean time the bells had not been idle, they had never ceased tinkling; and my father, alarmed at the unusual noise, came out, like the *commendatore* in Don Juan, with a light in one hand, and dressed in his bed-gown and night-cap; the footmen had arrived; the maids, who, from the noise, imagined the house was on fire, came rushing down stairs in light and careless vestments; and the butler placed himself between me and my father, whom I no sooner perceived than I made a quick advance to rush into his arms. This occasioned a scuffle for a second. My mother and her maid screamed



at hearing what was considered an attack ; the maids joined in the chorus ; the footmen recoiled a pace or two, for the panic was universal ; and, in the midst of screams and squalls, I got possession of my father's unemployed hand, and burst into a loud fit of laughter. It was one of the most beautiful sights in the world to see the maids retreat—for they were but thinly garbed—the native modesty which superseded one fear by a greater—the careful manner with which they folded their arms, and the hasty step as they flew up stairs amidst the titters of the footmen. I was soon in a comfortable bed, and in a pleasant sleep. I managed to get my commission for the *Lee* cancelled, and remained on shore, on half-pay, for two years ; during which time I made frequent visits to the continent, and extended my stock of useful information. I learnt to believe there were other people in the world besides ourselves, and I got rid of many ridiculous national prejudices.

One morning, when at breakfast, in came a long-looking letter, which was handed to me — “ On His Majesty's service,” and “ John Wilson Croker,” on the cover. I had grown used to the shore, and had no very anxious feeling about going to sea again. But here was an appointment to join a sloop of war, which, in the course of the day, I learnt, or rather had a hint given me, was going to the West-India station, and was then at Plymouth. The captain was a nobleman's nephew, of very high rank ; and there is always some benefit in sailing under an officer of good interest. Two or three chances are in your favour : one is, that he may take a fancy to you, and ultimately assist in your promotion by his interest ; another is, that his interest may be sufficient to get an advance of rank for himself ; and then, if you do not get his vacancy, you may follow him into a larger ship, and thus cement the friendship. The fact is, it is always desirable to be under men of rank and gentlemanly manners ; their rebukes are generally better worded, and convey more to a man of acute feeling than the boisterous intemperance of a mushroom officer. I was soon reconciled to my appointment, and repaired to Plymouth — found myself the first-

lieutenant — got the tops over without an accident — and began actively to make amends for the two years' forgetfulness on nautical subjects.

In the second chapter of the first volume I gave an account of a midshipman's berth and dinner in 1809. I will now give an account of a dinner given on board the *Britannia* by the midshipmen of that ship, in 1824; and we shall shortly see the beneficial effects of the system of 1815, in which year the navy was weeded, as they called it, from some objectionable subjects who could not produce a certificate that they were gentlemen, and whose characters had been examined with as much scrutiny as is practised when a man of not overgrown fortune is proposing to marry an heiress.

I received as regular an invitation as I should have done from the admiral, written upon gold-edged paper,

“ With a nice little crow-quill, delicate and new.”

The hour was fixed for six o'clock, because at that time the work of the squadron would be finished for the day. It was requisite to have had the first-lieutenant's permission for this hour; and some arrangement must have been made with the purser, for he is not obliged to burn coals because the midshipmen take it into their heads to give dinner-parties at six o'clock. The dinner was given in the gun-room, but we assembled in the admiral's cabin. I found myself by no means the only lieutenant; two or three belonging to the ship dined there; several officers of the garrison were present, and we sat down to dinner exactly thirty in number. The table was as well laid as footmen could do it — there was a profusion of plate, and the glasses, independently of being plentiful, were of the best manufacture. Every one, of course, was in uniform; the easy manner of the midshipman showed the vast benefit which had accrued from his having been placed on a better footing, and his rank in life properly estimated. There were bills of fare on the table—one of which, from curiosity, I pocketed, and, I very much regret, have since mislaid — for I should like to have copied it here, to show the elegance of the entertainment, and the refinement as to

selection. All official restraint was carefully laid aside, excepting that which never can be abandoned — I mean the use of the word “Sir,” in speaking to a senior officer. I know many men, and myself amongst the number, who never have been able in after-life, and when of the same rank as our former captains, to get rid of the stiff formality of always using his title, or of answering with the official monosyllable — “Sir!” It is an inveterate, genteel habit, which sticks by us, and which I like. “Too much familiarity breeds contempt,” as the copy says.

Every wine, or such as are met with in the best societies under similar circumstances, sparkled on the table. The conversation was instructive as well as pleasant. Not a luxury was omitted — not an impropriety occurred; and it was with very great satisfaction I saw with my own eyes, after having so long left a midshipman’s berth, that that which all officers of rank in the navy had formerly wished, had come to pass — that the grade of midshipman had become synonymous with that of gentleman: no man can now consider his son degraded by going into the navy, or associating with the inhabitants of the cockpit. I returned to my charge at ten o’clock at night, at which time the party were gradually diminishing, and I laid my head down with the perfect conviction that a beneficial change had taken place in the junior branches of the profession.

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VOLUME THE THIRD.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

"ONCE more upon the waters ; yes, once more." The sloop was soon ready for sea ; the guns, stores, provisions, on board ; the watch bill, quarter bill, and every thing but my tailor's bill, arranged ; top-gallant yards across ; the ship in the Sound, and expectation alive ; — but previously to this consummation, so devoutly to be wished by all first-lieutenants, I had obtained a few days' leave, and repaired to Brighton, at which place my parents were passing the winter. My leave and my visit were short, and I only mention it here because it was the last time I ever saw my mother. There was a gloom of anticipation on her mind that we never should meet again — a visible melancholy, which never had occurred before at our parting ; indeed, so often had we parted, and so often had we met again, that we became accustomed to the "good-bye," perfectly certain it would, at another period, be repeated : but this time we both felt more than usually distressed. The West Indies is known not to be a particularly healthy station ; and those who are past the sixtieth year of life can seldom calculate upon outliving three years, which period I was to be absent. I looked back with a melancholy satisfaction at our parting ; warmly and affectionately was I embraced by the best of parents, and the truest of friends. In manhood as I was, I could not refrain the tear, which, bursting from the heart, overflowed the eyes, before restraint could overcome nature. She bade me remember my younger brother, and to be his guardian until his age and experience might guide him in safety. The nurse, who from youth upwards had been in our family, and who now had grown grey in our service, was especially mentioned ; and, after a prayer for my

safety and my prosperity, such as only parents breathe, and affection dictates, I received the last fond kiss — the last warm and eager embrace, and left that home I never again was destined to revisit, until she who gave me birth had relinquished life.

It is said that the loss of a parent is one barrier destroyed which stood between the child and eternity. No one thinks of his own death when his parents live ; for it is natural to outlive them in imagination ; but I envy not that cold-hearted man who thinks of himself when he first hears of his parent's loss. Nay, if affection has swayed her breast — if duty has governed him — if the law of human nature has been observed — so great will the affliction be, so poignant the feeling, and so overwhelming the distress, that chilling avarice would stand rebuked, and all the finer feelings assert their rights. Let no one say it is childish to weep ; what nature prompts is always correct.

I confess I was heartily rejoiced when the ship was under weigh to her future destination. Change of scene, incessant occupation, the hope of novelty, soon contributed to banish the melancholy which had settled upon me.

I once thought the employment of a midshipman's boy the worst in life. I beg to correct the thought, and say, that a first-lieutenant is ten thousand times more to be pitied, because his is a very thankless situation. After all his troubles, all his labour, all his anxiety, he hears the captain complimented and not himself ; and all the praise which ought to be bestowed upon him, settles quietly on the brow of his commander. It is really quite astonishing with what coolness men appropriate to themselves what belongs to another, either in praise or money.

In thirty days after leaving Falmouth, the last English port we touched at, we arrived at Barbadoes. We stopped half a day at Teneriffe, and shipped plenty of wine. Our outward passage left no trace upon my mind of any thing agreeable. I most cordially abhorred my situation, and was eager to arrive to effect an exchange.

As I shall hereafter give one or two opinions upon the state of slavery in the West Indies, the probable amelioration of their condition, and their growing intelligence, I

think it right to state, that no man ever went to that country more satisfied than I was that the whole system of slavery was unjust in itself, and disgusting and degrading to a Christian government. I had read book after book upon the subject: I had imbibed the idea that the cart-whip was in constant use — that the negroes were half clad, half starved, and half murdered; in short, I had just the very notions implanted in me, that the Anti-slavery Reporter wishes, at this moment, to be received and credited by its readers.

The strange sight of the numerous women who crowd the decks of a man-of-war on her arrival in Barbadoes would strike any man more forcibly than a first-lieutenant; for in that troublesome situation of life you see every thing through a false medium. Women, if they are ever so pretty, or ever so beautifully shaped, are very much in the way on board a ship: they occupy more attention than the duty of a ship can allow; and, consequently, wherever there are women, some disagreement will arise. Our stay was short among the proud Barbadians, for the senior officer was anxious to get rid of us, and kept making our signal to weigh before we had half finished our trifling refit. It was very sharp practice, as the attorneys say, but we had no remedy; and we tripped our anchor, with all our topmast rigging adrift, and set it up when we got to sea. In seven days' time we were in sight of Jamaica. I have remarked that I was always out of luck; — I was at Constantinople during the plague — I was at Smyrna during the plague — at Corfu, Cephalonia, and Malta during the plague; and now, arrived in the West Indies during one of the worst seasons ever remembered. Who could believe, who gazed on the Blue Mountains and saw the rich cultivation of the beautiful island of Jamaica, that it could be so fatal to human life? As we ran close along the land, we gazed upon the verdure with continued delight, and little, very little, did it occur to us, that before one short year, a mere speck in the span of life, should have passed, more than half of the eyes which rested with satisfactory gaze on the island would be fixed in death! How often did I hear

my brother-officers saying, "Why, it is not so bad, after all — I had no idea we were to see so fine an island!" We had three marine-officers passengers with us; one, a captain, who came to occupy the place, both on board, and in a grave, of his predecessor. He was the most timid man I ever knew; and long before we had passed Teneriffe he began to anticipate his end: but when he saw Jamaica, he was so struck with its beauty, that he laughed at his own fears, and seemed to hope for the best.

Port Royal, the name of the principal harbour in Jamaica, has a town of the same name, which stands on a very low point of land, which forms the protection of the anchorage, and which is the termination of a long neck of land called the Palisades. The Palisades is the burial-place — the Golgotha of these parts. Unfortunately, every ship which comes from to-windward is obliged to pass near this resting-place of the weary; and numerous are the tombs to meet the eye of the fancied victim. Directly this place was pointed out to the captain of marines, all his courage failed him; he felt sick, became so, and was in the hospital twenty minutes after we anchored. It had a visible effect upon our captain: he went out prepared to die, or be promoted. Both occurred. When we first came into the trade-winds, he shaved his head, wore a wig, relinquished wine altogether, examined his tongue about twenty times a day, quacked himself every other morning, and of course lost all moral courage. It was evident that if he took the fever he was a dead man. I am willing to confess that there seemed a general apprehension on board this ill-fated ship, which was even conspicuous in her outward appearance, for she was painted entirely black; and I can recall to my recollection a kind of prophecy of Lady H., who remarked to me, "that she (the sloop) might be very neat, but that she looked like a hearse." She certainly was a hearse, to all intents and purposes.

Every new ship which comes upon the station is generally despatched to Vera Cruz with the mail. This is now, I believe, altered, as the packets touch there. The trip was always reckoned the worst which a ship could have, on

account of the very long passage back : it took us thirty days ; and certainly thirty days more disagreeably spent I never remember. At present, I shall make no remark about Vera Cruz, as it will occupy a very conspicuous place in my Life hereafter. On our return to Port Royal, our little ship was as healthy as was possible : we had not one man on the sick-list, and had only lost one, who had died of the yellow fever, and was buried on the Campeachy bank. This first funeral was an awful occurrence. We had been taught by the conversation of the old stationers to expect our share of misfortune ; but we had braved the idea until the reality occurred. The captain, who read the service, soon found himself unequal to the task ; and the tears he shed reflected more honour on him, and were more prized by the ship's company, as testimonials of his feelings, and his attachment to his crew, than if he had spoken to all eternity upon the subject.

When we arrived at Jamaica, I could not help being excessively amused at the first question of a midshipman who came on board from the guard-ship ; he seemed bursting with anxiety, and began by saying, " How do you do, eh ?—all pretty well, *I hope* ?—no deaths amongst the officers—neither of the lieutenants gone ? " and he seemed by no means very well pleased to hear we were all likely to do well for the present. It unfortunately happened that the next ship destined to carry the mail was not in harbour, for the packet arrived ten days before her time : we were the only ship ready, and we were again ordered to proceed ; so we did, the next morning — we cleared the harbour, and shaped our course. Nothing occurred during the day (for it was Sunday) but the usual prayers, which we never omitted if the weather was fine. The captain was no methodist : he never indulged in prayers of his own making : he read the regular church service in a proper religious manner ; and it was a sight which came home to the feelings and devotion of every man, to see the seamen returning thanks to God for all his protection and fatherly care. The preparations for this service may be briefly described :—seats are placed on the lee, and chairs on the windward side, of the deck ; the



first for the crew, and the last for the officers. The binnacle was converted into a reading-desk, and the captain officiated as preacher. Few people who have not witnessed a church service on board a ship would believe how properly and orderly seamen behave. They are particularly attentive to the service ; and, however rough and uncouth may be their outward appearance, they have very feeling hearts, upon which religion operates strongly ; very many retire after the service and read their Bibles, and profit by the instruction.

It was my first dog-watch. I kept watch, although I was first-lieutenant. At six o'clock, the time for my relief, the second-lieutenant came on deck. It was dark (for twilight is short in these countries), and the sun had set about half an hour before. In giving up charge of the deck, after mentioning the course to be steered, the sails, which were set, and such-like official minutiae, I took my relief to the starboard gangway, and said, " You see that black upon the horizon ? The captain and the master say it is the land-wind coming off : to me it looks like the land, and take care you don't run over it." After saying these words, and the second-lieutenant remarking that he would take good care of the ship, I went below, and placing myself by the table, commenced reading. Ten minutes had not elapsed before the ship was on the rocks, to the very great astonishment of all hands. Such an event was almost unheard of ; — that a vessel which had left Port Royal in the morning, and which had only shaped a course at four o'clock, should at half-past six be on shore, and she having had a fair wind the whole day ! The boats were immediately hoisted out, and an anchor laid out astern ; we had gone on right before the wind, and stem on she remained. The sea, which is always pretty high where trade-winds blow, lifted us more on the ledge ; and from the shock each time she struck, it was evident that she hung nearly amid-ships. The sails were all clewed up ; for the masts and yards shook so violently every time she struck, that it would have been insecure to have sent the men up aloft. In the mean time we started the water all but two tons

and made every preparation to heave the ship off. In this we entirely failed; and we had the satisfaction of knowing, — if in the course of the night we did not succeed — that when the sea breeze, which had now died away, commenced in the morning, and increased the swell, we should be lost to as great a certainty as we were on the rocks. I must here mention the beneficial results of tanks for water instead of casks: — we started the water in about ten minutes, and with only the aid of two men; one would have sufficed. Had casks been in use, it would have taken an hour and half the crew. True it is, that if the vessel is wrecked, the casks are the most beneficial; but, to avoid that calamity, tanks are a thousand times preferable.

The land-wind coming off, we made all sail, keeping the yards a-back. The mainmast shook and trembled to such a degree, that the second-lieutenant, who came to speak to me, advised me not to remain near the main hatchway, where I was, for he was in momentary apprehension of the masts going by the board. The capstan was manned; the breeze freshened; the ship lightened; and at one o'clock in the morning she floated, and, backing clear of the rocks, we stood out to sea. It appeared as if we had not sustained any serious damage, for there was no leak; but the rudder moved very stiffly, and we soon found out that some considerable calamity had occurred. We entirely failed during the night to make the discovery, and, to prevent any accident occurring, we kept the ship under very easy sail, standing off shore. In the morning the ragged wake convinced us some mischief was done: the pintles of the rudder were twisted to such a degree, that it was a miracle it hung; and one of the gudgeons was snapped off. We began to retrace our course to Port Royal: as the breeze freshened, we balanced the sails so as not to trouble the rudder much. In this predicament, a frigate was seen on the lee bow — it was the Hussar. We made known our condition; but she kept the signal flying, “to bear up and communicate with the commodore.” In vain we mentioned the perilous situation of the rudder: the signal was repeated, I think,

with a gun ; and the instant we put the helm up, and were obliged to use it, to keep the ship in her course, the pintles gave way, and the rudder separated. I never cursed a commodore half so much as I did now. The assistance he offered was not worth having, and could not counterbalance the catastrophe he had occasioned. The only thing we got from him was a sweep, with which we proposed and succeeded in steering the ship into Negril Bay, where we anchored.

It was now my time to see that splendid invention the Pakenham rudder ; but the business was, where to find the spare cap. There is no piece of lumber so hard to stow away as a spare cap. I suppose, out of a hundred ships which go to sea, ninety-nine never have occasion for it. I was at Brighton when this store was received on board. The second-lieutenant did not know where it was ; but after a diligent search, we hauled our friend out of the coal-hole. The spare top-mast, a part of the jib-boom, and a top-mast studding-boom, formed the new rudder, the interstices of which we filled up with a chain-cable. We planked it over all, and it looked a very creditable piece of machinery. In the mean time we prepared a hawser, by working Turks'-heads at every fathom ; and at daylight the next morning shipped our new rudder, and got under weigh. With a little care and attention of the officer of the watch, seeing the hawser always sufficiently taut, I believe we might in perfect security have gone round the world. The Hussar had taken the mail from us, and therefore we had no object in continuing to execute our first orders : besides, we were quite ignorant of the damage we had sustained.

We returned to Port Royal, and hove the ship down. It is a very lucky man who is on board a ship which runs on shore, if she is saved, and he has no responsibility. Very few who have not been in these situations know how to act ; and had it not been for a book, with a plate of the Pakenham rudder, I could no more have dictated the plan to the carpenter, than I could have made a lace veil. I have had the luck to be nearly lost in every ship that I have either served in or commanded ; and certainly some

of the inventions to save men, which have been proposed by others, never would have occurred to me. Now came our miseries. Heaving a ship down in July, in Port Royal harbour, is not the most comfortable or cool occupation in life. I will admit every possible care was taken to keep the men out of the sun, and sober : but all our ship's company were obliged to live in the capstan-house ; and the little nigger girls, who only cared about making money, and thought nothing about the probable fate of Massa Buckra, used very frequently to sell spirits, instead of spruce-beer : so that, between drunkenness, excessive fatigue a hot sun, and unadulterated spirits, we contributed our share to the Palisades, and began to stock the hospital.

Fortunately, the ship was not much injured, and was soon repaired, righted, and rigged ; but we had yet the court-martial to undergo. We had still to remain in harbour, and I turned my thoughts to getting clear of the hearse. In this I succeeded, and was removed to the *Lively*, under the command of one of the most gallant officers in the navy, and one who has as many orders which he has nobly won (with the exception of my gallant friend, Sir Sydney Smith), as any man in the profession ; but we were not destined to get out of this hot-bed of fever and of death. We had about four courts-martial in store ; and owing to the squadron, or a sufficient number of ships, not being in port, we were obliged to await their tedious arrival. In the mean time the fever began to spread rapidly on board the *Lively* : the first-lieutenant was one of the first attacked, and thus I became again a senior officer. We had very little to do but to scrub the decks ; for the crew were almost all at the hospital, and the ship was alongside the wharf. In the mean time the courts-martial took place, and we came off pretty leniently for such a bungling business ; the master was reprimanded, and *we* escaped.

My constant practice was to rise a little before daylight, and to walk in the cool of the morning ; but we have no verdure at Port Royal to cheer the eye : it is one sandy miserable hole—hot as a place which would assist the

alliteration of heat — without comforts, and without enjoyments. One morning, in getting out of bed, I was seized with a shivering fit. Well I knew what was to follow. I immediately swallowed ten grains of calomel, and walked to the dockyard. We had some men in irons for drunkenness ; I desired they might be released, intending, after I had lectured them, not to have them reported to the captain. I thought this might be the last act of mercy I should ever be able to perform — at least I knew the chances were equal, as to being alive or dead the next day. It is quite extraordinary how very merciful we become when these kind of ideas present themselves, backed up by the hospital, the scene closing with a few black bearers and a coffin, with a panoramic view of the Palisades in the distance. The culprits stood before me : they were warned of the dreadful effects of drunkenness in such a climate, and during such a season ; the melancholy mortality which daily occurred was brought to their recollection ; and in the middle of a very fine concluding sentence, “ on the violation of the articles of war, and the dreadful responsibility of such a wanton suicide,” I was seized with a sudden giddiness, fell into the arms of the midshipman of the watch, and forthwith was taken by four marines into a room in the capstan-house, and placed in the bed of one of the other lieutenants, who made room for his unfortunate messmate. I shivered with cold, and then burnt with heat. The surgeon was at Kingston, but was expected to arrive every moment : quite in vain I sent for another, for none could be found. I was perfectly myself, and knew what was to be done. My first care was to send to a mulatto woman, and hire her and her three slaves to attend me. She took me under her protection in a moment ; and so far I was well provided with nurses. I sent for a barber, and had my head shaved ; thus when the surgeon — and a very clever surgeon was Mr. Campbell — arrived, he found his patient had forestalled his advice. He would not bleed me until the sea-breeze came down ; but he crammed me with calomel ; and when the *doctor* (for so the hot air, misnamed a sea-breeze, is called) at last gave us a chance of respiration, the lancet was very

freely administered, a large blister was clapped on my back, and one on each side of my temples.

By twelve o'clock that excellent kind-hearted man Dr. Lang, of the naval hospital, had paid me a visit, and declared that I was as much altered as if I wore a mask. I do not know if I was, nor will I pay myself the compliment to think that I was a particular favourite ; but no officer of my rank so completely fell into kind arms as I did. Mr. Pitt (who has not heard of Billy Pitt ?), the master-attendant, gave me a room in his house, and another one close to me for the surgeon ; the mulatto lady and her slaves were in attendance ; and I directed half a dozen large fans, with plenty of rose-water, to be bought. I arranged the watches of the slaves for the night, to their very great surprise at my methodical way and cool behaviour ; but when I desired one fan always to be kept wet with rose-water, in order to cool the air as the slave fanned me, they declared I was already mad, and began in their black jargon to jabber one to another.

" Hy, Susan ! you no see Massa F. ; him go mad — him talk of rose-water for coolem air : — him really mad for true."

" Really, Lucy, you shame you, — him peak like buckra ; him no go mad. — Why you no fan him now ?"

I took the liberty of interfering in behalf of my addled brain, and the slaves continued their occupations. I fell into a gentle sleep ; but the instant I did so, neither Lucy, Susan, or Sambo, thought proper to continue their avocations, and I had always to rouse them to be kept cool. Thirteen days did I remain in this situation, unable to move, fed with a quill, and washed by a slave. Every time they attempted to raise me to dress the blister on my back, I fainted ; and on one day I enacted death no less than six times. I was now sinking fast ; all hope of a recovery gone ; my former captain had taken leave of me with tears in his eyes ; the expectant midshipman for a death vacancy already rubbed his hands, in earnest hope my grave would be his stepping-stone. I was perfectly delirious ; my very substance had wasted to a skeleton ; the nurse stood in silence, and in tears, by the bed ; and

the doctor declared the coming night would be my last of worldly sufferings.

It was about seven o'clock in the evening that I saw Dr. Lang by my bed-side. I was as perfectly composed then as I am at this minute. I remember his feeling my pulse, his standing with his eyes fixed upon me, and his continued whisper with Dr. Campbell. At last Dr. Lang said, "Oh ! yes, we may as well try it,—it cannot do any *harm* !" Then came something like work amongst the slaves, and in a quarter of an hour I was taken out of bed, and popped into a hot-bath. It had an instantaneous effect upon me, and I said, in a firmer voice than I had mustered for some time, "I am not going to die this time !" The black nurse re-echoed it. "Hy ! him no die dis time ; him really fine heart. Keep up him spirits, sar ! — him no die." In the mean while my bed was changed. During the time I was in the bath the doctor stood by the side in anxious expectation ; and after a quarter of an hour's boiling I was placed in bed, and instantly fell asleep. In the morning the change was discernible to inexperienced eyes : it was, as Lang said, a miracle ; and I was pronounced as likely to recover. In the early stage of my sickness, one of my friends sent me a keg of tamarinds, which was placed in the corner of the room ; and about the sixth day, when my strength so completely failed as to leave me without the power of speech above a whisper, I saw my two black ladies quietly seat themselves by the tamarind-jar, take out the bung, and begin dipping their black paws therein. After sucking their apologies for fingers, they were again immersed in the jar ; and, in short, my patience and my tamarinds began to decrease pretty rapidly. It was quite in vain I tried to speak ; I could not have frightened a mouse from my nose ; but I could hear pretty well, and overheard the two little niggers, whose sparkling eyes and black faces resembled imps from the infernal regions waiting for their prey, giving vent to their feelings in the following conversation :—

"Susan, me dearly love dem tamarinds. Massa Buckra no want dem to-morrow : him die to-night for true."

"Hy, Lucy! — me no can tink what for Massa Buckra come here for die and go to um Palisades. Why him no die at home?"

"See, Susan, how im look! — him really bad for true. — Why you feared for? Take um tamarinds, and no look so *pale*."

In such-like comfortable manner I heard my death announced, and saw what at that moment I most prized in the world a prey to slaves. When they had gorged themselves, they came near the bed, and fanned me for a moment, and then, quietly laying the fans down, said, "What for good to fan *um dead man*?" — thereby launching me before my time.

There are few opportunities in life of being grateful; a man receives a benefit, and is too poor to requite it: —

"Words are easy, like the wind,  
Faithful friends are hard to find."

It was my fortunate lot to find them; everything which could have annoyed me ceased. The dockyard bell was stopped, sentinels were posted near the house to hinder any conversation taking place, and to enforce silence. From all quarters I received the greatest attention and civility: strangers to me came daily to inquire after my progress; every medical man from either hospital or squadron visited me, and every suggested hint was instantly acted upon. But amongst all those whose kindness I cannot forget, one stood pre-eminently distinguished: — that man was Mr. Pitt, now the master-attendant at Malta. His house, before the abode of hospitality, and through which the jovial song and the ready peal of laughter was heard, became a sepulchre as to silence. He sat by me, watched me, consoled me: he would not allow the slightest noise to take place within my hearing; and every whimsical wish which a person expresses under such an infliction he readily complied with, and cheerfully acquiesced in. He *was* my friend; and the sun of life must set before his friendship shall be obliterated.

I have dwelt longer on this subject than I had intended, because I like to brood over the uncertainty of fate, and to fix in the minds of others the great truth of "Whilst



there is life, there is hope." My former shipmates all came to see me—to take a last look of one who never had ill-used them. It was a gratification, and a very great one too, when I heard that both captain and mess-mates left the room with tears in their eyes, deploring my loss, and lamenting my fate. I recovered :—every one of those died within a month ! Thirty days from that last visit, every one—captain, lieutenants, and midshipmen, were buried near Carthagea ! The fever broke out on board the ship the day after she left Port Royal, and, a week after her arrival, she had not men enough to keep the decks clean. She lost three surgeons, her captain, one lieutenant, three midshipmen, and forty men ; and vessels were obliged to be sent from Port Royal to bring her in safety to Jamaica.

In my sickness, I suffered very little pain, and still less anxiety ; but the yellow fever does produce scenes the most horrible to witness, and the most painful to relate. Some are fearfully deranged, and die in the most horrible agony ; whilst others, blessed with what is called the "fatal lull," slide into their graves without a murmur. Two or three very singular cases of this kind occurred on board that unfortunate ship the *Scylla*. The surgeon, who had been seriously ill, and, in short, given over, appeared one morning, on deck, dressed as neatly as ever, and was seen visiting the sick and prescribing for them. The captain—for poor Russell was not then attacked—kindly remonstrated with the surgeon on the impropriety of his being out of his bed, and urged him to go below and lie down. The surgeon replied, "that he never was better in his life, and that his duty was to attend to his patients."

"And to yourself also, doctor," said the captain : "your life is too precious now to be trifled with."

The surgeon visited every one of his patients, and made his report to the captain ; after which he expressed himself fatigued, and retired to his cabin : he fell dead in the act of taking off his coat !

One of the youngsters who came from the College, and who was universally beloved and respected for his gentlemanly behaviour and his superior talents, was seized with

this cursed fever — well may I call it a cursed fever, for it has deprived me of my best friends, and certainly did not improve my constitution. In three days he had gone through the different stages, and arrived at raging madness! The distinct consequence of mortification of the stomach having taken place had been exhibited, and the pall of death was suspended by a hair over his hammock. To the very great surprise of the first-lieutenant, this youngster came and reported some official business, apparently as well as he had ever been in his life.

“Well done, youngster,” said the first-lieutenant: “why, this is sharp work indeed! Why, what the devil has cured you?”

“Me, sir!” replied the youngster; “I never was ill.”

“Something very like it, then,” resumed the first-lieutenant: “as you look rather pale, you had better lie down, I think, and keep yourself quiet.”

“When my watch is over, sir,” replied the boy, “I will: for I feel rather tired.”

His watch, poor little fellow, was over! the last sand in the glass of life had run out, and he had little to fear that mortal voice should start him from his slumber, or awaken him to his duty — he died before he reached his hammock, and his last word was my name.

There are scenes in a sailor’s life not easily forgotten. We roam about the world; we change our climate, and we vary our society; but believe me we have hearts true to the call of misery, and which fearfully vibrate over a bitter remembrance. How often have I looked over the page of life, and seen the blots which obliterated the names of my early companions — some gone of common disease — some killed in battle — some stung by disappointment — some buried by the hands of slaves — all dead!

Let me pay a just tribute of gratitude to poor Lang; and then farewell to such a painful subject. I lived to bury Lang; and to him and Campbell I owe my life. To show the estimation in which the former was held, I shall only sketch the circumstances which led to his death, and relate his funeral honours. In dissecting a body dead of consumption, Lang pricked the fore-finger of the left

hand: it was so trifling as hardly to be perceptible. I met him in the hospital about an hour afterwards; and during our conversation, I frequently remarked him sucking his fore-finger, and shaking his head, as if in some pain. I asked the cause of this unusual proceeding, and he replied what I have stated above, remarking at the same time, "that he was in some pain, which seemed creeping up his arm."

As I knew in that climate that tetanus was very common from these trifling wounds, I recommended him to send for the surgeon of the *Isis*, in whom I knew he had great confidence, and not to trifle when trifles sometimes led to such serious consequences. He smiled, and continued the conversation. About half an hour had elapsed, when he complained of serious pain, and I immediately sent for his friend. It was singular that our conversation turned upon promotion, he mentioning that mine was certain within a week, and saying with rather a bitter smile, "by that time somebody will have succeeded me too." The whole of the hospital had been built under Lang's inspection; and he often expressed a wish to see it finished, and then to invalid or resign. He was poulticed and bled, and before nine o'clock he was in a violent fever. News so distressing was not likely to be underrated by the black population of Port Royal. Lang, with his excellent heart, was never appealed to in vain, even by a negro. I have seen him, when his own hospital was crowded, steal a moment to visit the sick, and contribute to their necessities, not only by medical advice, but with money. He was respected and beloved by every man and woman in the place, and by the navy he was idolised.

The next day the report was very bad indeed, and, from Lang's tender frame, the worst consequence might be apprehended. Sir Lawrence Halsted, who was ever ready to assist the poorest object, became alarmed for the state of his friend, and sent one of the most experienced medical men in Jamaica to Port Royal; and I asked the assistance of Dr. Chamberlaine — the Sir Astley Cooper of the West. I had only to ask. There are few men like Dr. Chamberlaine for generosity and willingness to oblige. The doctor

sent by the admiral reported favourably of the patient ; but Chamberlaine instantly said, " He is a lost man : his frame is too weak to bear the treatment he must undergo."

The next day opinions varied again. Chamberlaine, when we returned to Kingston,—for I was that day promoted, and resided with him,—remarked, " he will never live until nine o'clock to-morrow morning." At eight the next day, a boat from the Isis was waiting for Chamberlaine, and I walked down to the landing-place with him. The telegraph in the morning had given some hope of a recovery, but Chamberlaine, as if cursed with second-sight, said, " I will go to oblige you, but rely upon it he is dead." He had not uttered the words a minute before one of the Port Royal boats, for which we had waited to hear the report, announced the truth of the doctor's words.

He was buried, not by the hands of either slaves or foreigners ; neither was he packed into a shallow grave, in that general cemetery—the Palisades : his grave was dug by the side of the gate leading to his hospital : every officer attended, and every man in Port Royal was a spectator. The service was read in the church ; and Alves, who had buried thousands, and heard the last gurgling accents of hundreds of dying penitents—who had seen, and been used to heart-rending scenes so constantly that his feelings must have been partially blunted, did not read that service through without a pause ; neither were his the only tears shed over departed worth or fleeted friendship. It was the most melancholy funeral I ever attended, for the church was crowded by men who had faced death in all its horrors, and who were now out-faced by its presence. The words of the preacher hardly faltered into hearing ; the clerk's " amen " was inaudible ; and eyes which had seen death approach unmoved, and ears which had listened to the cries of the wounded, and the wail of the dying, neither saw nor heard that ceremony without an awful confession of its solemnity. His memory ended not with his funeral : a subscription was raised by the admiral, the officers, and the seamen of the fleet ; and the stone which covers the body of poor Lang records his worth, and is a monument

indicative of the gratitude of his friends, and the remembrance he deserved.

I have in this chapter not been very particular as to time. Lang's death took place long after the anecdotes mentioned previously, and before I assumed my captain's rank. I must take the reader to a part of the world very little understood in England, and likely to be as nice a drain upon her wealth, as once was the famed Mississippi, or the pearl-diving speculation in the Colorado river.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

It was on that day which left the king of Spain without one foot of territory (with the exception of Culloa) in the New World, that I landed at Vera Cruz. Our passage in the *Lively* had been short and pleasant. To avoid the shot and shell which every now and then passed between the hostile parties, the frigate was anchored off the island of Sacrificios. The near view from the anchorage is not very enticing ; for Vera Cruz stands on low ground, and the country around the city is not in high cultivation ; but the distant mountains of the Peroté—the snow-capped Orizava, which rises 17,000 feet above the level of the sea, the grandeur, the magnificence of nature, make ample amends for the dilapidation of the works of art, or the destruction occasioned by man. The fort of St. Juan d'Ulloa still resisted, and had resisted for six years all approaches of the Mexicans. It is built upon an island, about a quarter of a mile from the city of Vera Cruz, and forms the protection of the harbour of that name.

For months previously to my arrival the city had been daily and nightly wasting powder and shot upon the impervious walls of St. Juan ; and although the fire of the fort had slackened its rapidity, still the sound of its guns reverberated in the distance, and its destructive fire was conspicuous in the appearance of the town. It was known that the garrison were actually starving ; that sickness and

famine had done more than all the energies of the Mexicans united ; and that the squadron sent from the Havannah, in order to throw in fresh supplies of men and provisions, had been overtaken by a hurricane—that some were dismasted, and all dispersed.

It was not until the garrison, which consisted of six hundred men, had been wasted by the fire of the enemy, sickness, want of common aliment, and over-exertion, to forty-seven men, and some of those scarcely able to stand, that General Coppinger consented to surrender his charge. A heart-rending affair it was ; for the very morning that the agreement took place — that the troops of the fortress should be removed the following day, and the Mexicans take possession, an American schooner hove in sight to windward : she bore up, and ran for the anchorage of Vera Cruz. The Mexican squadron, which was at anchor close to us, saw the approaching relief, and could not get under weigh to counteract it, for it blew a hard gale of wind. The gallant captain of the schooner, as he approached the castle, showed the Spanish flag over the quarter nearest the fort ; and notwithstanding the hail of grape-shot by which he was saluted, he ran his little vessel under the walls, and began to discharge her cargo in the face of the enemy. Poor Coppinger ! who had signed the articles of his surrender, was too honourable a man to seize the advantage now offered, and which might have enabled him still to maintain the fort. The schooner was soon towed over to the Mexican side, and shortly afterwards we saw the republican flag on the walls of St. Juan.

There is a satisfaction in recording the actions of the brave. When Coppinger saw himself and his brave soldiers left to inevitable surrender, with neither men, ammunition, provisions, or hope, he called the remainder of his gallant men around, and stated, “ That if after all their toils and all their endeavours, they considered the surrender of the fort in the smallest degree dishonourable ; or if they thought that the destruction of the castle would in any way benefit the cause of Spain, that he himself would satisfy any scruples of conscience on these heads, by applying a match to the magazine, and, in the destruction

of his charge, himself, and his soldiers, prove to the world, and his king, that confidence had not been misplaced in the gallant men he saw round him." Spaniards, although when placed behind walls, unconquerable, have an insuperable objection to deliberate death; and when the proposition rested between a prison or a sky-rocket, they very wisely preferred the former; and the castle was surrendered.

It was deemed advisable to send off a courier with this important news to our minister at Mexico; and I was appointed to be the bearer of the despatches. I left Vera Cruz at eight o'clock in the morning, having agreed for a round sum of money to be conveyed to Xalappa by four o'clock the next day, and to arrive at the first sleeping place, Puente del Rey, by five o'clock. We (for I had a companion in Mr. Oughton, the purser of the *Lively*) had intended to have started at four o'clock in the morning; but Spaniards are not larks: the dawn of day seldom surprises a native of this part of the world either at prayers or singing. However, as we had our "*convenio*," or agreement, signed by the driver, we were at his mercy entirely; and as long as he adhered to his resolutions as to the time of our arrival, we could not object to the hour at which he thought fit to start.

At Santa Fé, nine miles from Vera Cruz, which is approached by a narrow sandy road, cut through a thick wood, we saw the first monument of mining insanity: there lay, and are now lying in idle heaps, pipe upon pipe, and boiler upon boiler. This cargo was landed in July, 1825, and was destined for the Real del Monte mine, which is about 270 miles from Santa Fé. The speculators in these bubbles were so badly informed as to the country, that they hurried out ship-loads of stores, every one of which could have been cast in Mexico for half the money it cost to remove those sent out to their destination. Some of the pipes are now buried under the sand at Mocambo, a place seven miles to the eastward of Vera Cruz, where they were first landed.

Our *conducteur* arrived at Puente del Rey at his promised hour: it is only forty miles from Vera Cruz; but

the roads are so insufferably bad, that we very seldom continued for any time in a trot, and the same mules had to drag our cumbersome vehicle through the deep sand of the low lands, and up the steep ascent of the rising grounds. We were surprised to find a very neat inn, and every thing clean and comfortable. Our books, by former travellers, certainly prepared us for much worse than we found. In the evening, some of the village musicians came to treat us with a serenade, which was concluded by a very sprightly dance: the circumstance of the dancers singing gives a great animation to the scene. There is an odd custom observable in these dances. Supposing a young girl to be pretty, and to have excited your admiration, the method of conveying your sentiments is to place your hat upon her head. It would be considered a very bad compliment, indeed an unpardonable rudeness, in her to shun the honour. When the dance is concluded, she returns the hat, and you make her a present of some money; but the sum must be small, or it would be considered as insulting her modesty. Our beds were stretchers, with sheets, &c.; a luxury never to be met with in the interior.

We started the next morning by seven o'clock, and proceeded rapidly on our journey, and soon began the ascent of the Saragota mountain, on the once far-famed paved road. This was begun many years back by the merchants of Vera Cruz, with the intention of continuing it to Mexico; a most laborious undertaking, which failed from want of funds, and the immense difficulties to be surmounted. One of the mining companies attempted to repair some of the dilapidations of time; but after completing eight yards, they relinquished the task, for the expense was enormous.

The general view of the country, as we neared Xalappa, was greatly improved; burning sands gave way to wooded upland; the road, to use Bullock's words, is "bordered by the most luxuriant trees and shrubs of every form and hue. It might be compared to an extensive park in Europe, having its woods bounded by the succession of the finest exotic trees and plants to be found in our hot-houses and conservatories." A little allowance for the traveller's



ecstasies, on getting clear of Vera Cruz, is perhaps desirable ; but beyond a doubt the general view is beautiful.

In passing the different villages, the houses we observed were sometimes of mud, and sometimes large sheds, covered with leaves, the building itself being of long cane, and freely admitting the air — not unlike a bird-cage, thatched ; cattle were plentiful, and the ground partially cultivated. If, however, we saw not the houses of the opulent, we were not molested by the beggar ; our charity was never once solicited between Vera Cruz and Xalappa. The people seemed contented with their diet and their poverty — with their rags, friolas (a kind of bean), and garlic. They exhibited little curiosity in regard to the strangers, and either swung about in hammocks suspended to the trees, or continued their listless occupations.

In a work of this kind, I do not intend to introduce a regular descriptive journal, because in so doing I should occupy the whole volume. The remarks will embrace a general view of the country, without minutely examining every inn, village, or town, through which we passed ; besides, we had very little time to search into domestic habits, or to loiter in a gambling-house. The latter is the seventh heaven of any Mexican, from the president down to the arriero.

Xalappa is about 4,700 feet above the level of the sea, with a healthy climate : the town is neat and clean ; the women are pretty, and the men, although small in stature, generally robust and healthy.

I cannot help remarking a picture in the church of St. Jose : the subject is the Last Supper. Here the cherubim and seraphim have undergone a terrible degradation, for instead of being represented, as is usual, in heaven, they are figuring as cooks and scullions. They are drawn as all head and wings, but busily employed ; — one is scouring a dish in a kind of modern European kitchen another is blowing the fire in the Spanish manner ; a third is frying eggs ; in the background some are officiating as waiters, handling the plates, and making all necessary preparations : it must be confessed rather an extraordinary idea, and does infinitely more credit to the artist as a poet,

than as a painter. In the church of St. Francisco, Lazarus is represented as a rich don in golden inexpressibles ; and owing to the compact state of the garb, the dogs seem looking in vain to perform their healing avocation.

It is scarcely credible the lamentable ignorance which pervades all classes of the Mexicans ; but it is in religion that this ignorance is more particularly conspicuous. The Spaniards, as their historians relate, in compensation for their heartless cruelties and cursed tyranny, introduced “ the blessed light of religion and liberty : ” of the first, their bigoted blindness prevents them appreciating the blessings ; and as to the last, it has been from the days of Montezuma to the last manifesto of Santa Anna, a word without a meaning.

We slept at a posada, kept by one Franceskin : it was the best in the town ; and truly might we say that “ bad was the best.” We were ushered into our rooms by a dirgy, dirty drab, and given the key to secure our property. The furniture, or rather the room, was as follows : —four whitewashed walls —one small window —one door —one stretcher —one old rickety chair, and one anciently constructed and lamentably disfigured table. I once saw a looking-glass. As far as subsistence was required we fared indifferently enough ; but all travellers should remember that the less they eat and drink, and the sooner they forget what they have swallowed, the better for themselves and the public ; there surely is nothing less entertaining than reading what a man has eaten, or at what hour he dined.

We soon arranged for proceeding on our journey. A *convenio* was signed, in which it was agreed that, for the sum of seventy dollars, we were to be conveyed in three days to Puebla de los Angeles (the City of the Angels). We started at four o'clock in the morning in a carriage of ancient model, drawn by nine mules. The general mode of driving these hardy animals is by a postilion on the leading mules ; then come five harnessed abreast of each other, and then two shafters, on one of which is a postilion, and armed with the same long tormenting kind of whip used by the French in driving their diligences. It seemed

an endless business, the eternal mounting of the Peroté: we never went out of a walk for upwards of six hours, during which time we toiled at the ascent. Had it not been for the honour of the carriage, as the Irishman said, who was put in a sedan-chair without a bottom, and led through every puddle in the street, we might as well have *walked*; for from the commencement of the mountain, until we had reached its summit, we did not embarrass the mules by adding our weight to that of our rickety vehicle. Day dawned more magnificently than I had ever previously seen it; the wide extended view, in which was comprised every scenery but that of the ocean—the snow-capped Orizava—the deep and fertile valleys—the rugged rock, and the hardy pines, which struck their roots and flourished where vegetation seemed a mockery, gave me a greater idea of the beauty of this part of the globe, than all the writings of Humboldt could inspire. After a tedious journey, which placed us on a level 12,000 toises, according to the greatest of all travellers, above Vera Cruz, we established a trot, and, entering the town of Peroté, took up our quarters at the sign of the Cavallo Colorado.

No officious servant sprung to release us from our confinement; no master appeared to urge on his lazy domestics to their duty; no eager chambermaid with neat dress, curled hair, or ruddy complexion, came to offer a welcome. No—this is a free country; “here the slave is freed from the master!” Here, it would appear, “that the wicked ceased from troubling, and the weary are at rest.” I hate all descriptions of inns, &c., but I must vent my spleen upon those miserable abodes in the Mexican states, and, in drawing a faithful account of the interior of the rooms in the Cavallo Colorado, give the general outline of such places between Vera Cruz and Mexico, with the exception of Puente del Rey.

“Hai quartos?” vociferates the tried traveller. “Si hai,” is answered by the cook, who is generally the *waiting* maid of the establishment; and forthwith she marches in advance, with a key large enough for a poker. This opens a door leading immediately into the apartment, which,

from the exterior, never could have been surmised. Without making any comment, the key is placed in the traveller's charge, and he is left to himself. You cannot rob the landlord; that he has effectually guarded against, for there is not one article of furniture in the apartment: it is as bare as it was built, with the exception of four or five planks six inches thick, which are raised from the ground about two feet, and which constitute the soft reposing spot of the weary. They afterwards brought in what was dignified as a table: it consisted of two planks placed upon trestles, and was more like a carpenter's bench on board a ship, than household furniture. A hole in the table held the candle; there was only one knife in the house, and that belonged to the kitchen; and as to forks, we never ventured to ask for them. I had learnt in my youth at Constantinople the use of my fingers, and I consoled myself with the following reflections:—that the misery was entirely of my own seeking, and that comforts would be doubly sweet hereafter. There is always a great difficulty in procuring any thing to eat: to the first question, relative to the cook having any provisions at hand, you are answered in the broad affirmative with an indication of surprise as to the question: and then come the following demands and responses; but it must be clearly understood that in this country volubility of discourse, except in drunkenness, is not the national feature. "Hai algonas cosas à comer?" is the first interrogatory with all hungry men: it is answered by, "Si—hai;"—to which is added the look of surprise: pleased at the idea of avoiding starvation, the conversation is resumed with eagerness.

"Hai carne?" says the traveller, meaning beef.

"No hai carne!" is the response.

"Hai castrato?" (Mutton.)

"Castrato no hai!!"

"Hai gallena?" (Poultry.)

"No hai gallena!!!"

"Hai huevos?" (Eggs.)

"Huevos no hai!!!!"

“ Hai friolas ? ” (Beans.)

“ Si—Hai ! ”

God bless the never-failing *friolas* and garlic ! it is a delightful dish for ostriches’ stomachs, and prevents any man from being guilty of that detestable sin, gluttony.

Night draws its sable curtains, as the novel-writers say ; and the weary and the hungry, after placing their saddles for pillows, or using their hats for such, if they ride in carriages — with loaded pistols and drawn sword by their sides — the door locked and the candle kept burning — and without divesting themselves of their garments — lie down upon the hard six-inch plank ; and if the fleas and the flies, the mosquitoes or the bugs, cease their almost unceasing visitation, the exhaustion of nature murmurs for sleep, and the repose, although short, is sound and sweet.

Day makes its welcome appearance : a cup of chocolate, always good, is the breakfast (the prime minister, Señor Estava, kept a chocolate shop) ; and then for the carriage and the jolt.

At Peroté we saw the first regular plantation of the aloe, or maqui ; and here the traveller may taste in some perfection the celebrated pulque, the national beverage of the inhabitants. Before pulque has undergone fermentation, and while fresh and sweet from the plant, it is a delightful, cool, and wholesome liquid ; but should it stand in the sun and become strong, it acquires a sour taste, and looks like buttermilk. It was very justly compared by my companion to the fermented mare’s milk of the Tartars. When in the latter state, it is very intoxicating, and consequently very pernicious. Thank Heaven, I never was fed upon any milk half so sour as mare’s milk in my life, and therefore am not responsible for the simile. Before the flower-stalk of the aloe, which some travellers have seen twenty feet high, blossoms, it is cut down close to the plant, a hollow is scooped out, and, for some months, the nourishment, which was by nature intended for this stalk, runs into the hollow, and in that state it is drank, and called “ pulque dulce.”

Our road was now over a sandy plain, nine thousand

feet above the level of the sea, with little to amuse, for there was little to see. Nature was grand; but one soon gets tired of grandeur. Herds of cattle grazing, sheep in large flocks, and occasionally a *recua* of mules, were the only moving creatures we saw. The country appeared a desert, for, from Tippiawalco (I am not sure of the orthography) to Ojo d'Aqua, where we slept, we only passed one *hacienda* of any magnitude. Near this was a patch of Indian corn; but, generally speaking, I never saw a less cultivated, less interesting country. On this plain I first saw the mirage to perfection; and I could not persuade myself that we were not on the borders of a large lake studded with islands.

By five o'clock we were at Ojo d'Aqua, having left Peroté at half-past three in the morning. We had been no less than thirteen hours going forty-two miles; and such was the fatigue even at that slow pace, that one mule died on the road, and another was obliged to be unharnessed to prevent a similar calamity.

At four o'clock the next morning we were again progressing; and, passing through Nopoluca, one of the neatest villages on the road, proceeded through the thick wood of pines, called the Pinal. We arrived at Alcaxete, and stopped for an hour at the Méson de la Purissima Concepcion. After such a name, I must mention that we got something to eat, had wooden spoons and forks, and were accommodated in the kitchen.

The first part of the road between Alcaxete and Puebla baffles all description. It was a tedious journey, and concluded at six o'clock, by our safe arrival at Puebla de los Angeles. We drove into the court-yard of the Méson de Christo, unpacked our vehicle, and took possession of our four walls.

Throughout the whole of Mexico the profanation of sacred names is conspicuous. Here we were, for instance, in Christ's house, in the City of Angels; and here a circumstance occurred very derogatory to the sacred name of the mansion and its inhabitants. Having deposited our portmanteaus, and carefully locked our door, we entered a kind of coffee-room below, and ordered dinner. Scarcely

were we seated before the landlord entered, and told us that our window was open, and that the property would not be safe without this ingress was closed. I distinctly recollected having myself bolted the shutter, because, in so doing, I remarked that we might purchase some straw hammocks, and that the bolt was sufficiently strong to hold one end of the swinging bed. However, it is always wise to attend to any hint touching security of person or property ; and, consequently, I left my-dinner to close the aperture. To do this I had to enter the room. I instantly missed my friend's portmanteau, in which were the money and letters of introduction, besides all he had in the *New World* as to clothes ; for the *Lively* had before this sailed for England, and left us behind. This was a serious loss ; and I could not help some very profane allusions as to the honesty of angels. It was beyond a doubt that by some means the bolt had been worked back, and the property stolen. Our only hope was the *Alcalde* ; but Don Ignacio Calderon, although a very gentlemanly man, had the blind partiality of his countrymen in regard to religious opinions. I stated the case, and very broadly ventured a hint that I did think the master of the hotel must have been aware that we bolted the window, because it was to him that I made the remark about the hammocks. In return for my suspicion I was called a heretic, and consequently not worthy of belief. My story was, however, heard and commented upon. Shoulders were shrugged, cigars lighted, and we were given very plainly to understand that there was little hope of the restitution of property. In return for this cold complacency, I said the town ought to be called *Puebla de los Ladrones*, and walked out under a shower of maledictions.

As the news of the surrender of the fort had preceded us by some days, and as we heard that the *Lively* had sailed for England, I deemed it quite useless hurrying myself, and therefore resolved to remain in this second heaven of the Mexicans for some few days.

As we had some doubts of the departure of the *Lively*, notwithstanding the many reports we had received, we resolved to return with all despatch to Vera Cruz, and the

next morning commenced our journey. On arriving at the Méson de la Purissima Concepcion, I overheard the lady of the mansion in earnest conversation concerning travellers being waylaid in the wood of the Pinal. A little attention to the dialogue convinced me that we were the destined victims, and forthwith I sent to the alcalde requesting an escort. The terms agreed upon were one dollar for each man of the guard, to see us safe through the wood, or to leave us out of all danger. The alcalde pledged his word as to the respectability and courage of our protectors, and we advanced on our journey. I directed four men to keep in advance, and four in the rear of the carriage; the remaining two (we had ten in all) rode by the side of us. We had not progressed far into the deep wood, before the advance-guard gave the signal to be in readiness; and they, instead of falling back upon the centre position, galloped on, and were soon out of sight. Five men, muffled up, emerged from a narrow pass and rode towards us. I would not have given at that moment five dollars for all we possessed. The rear-guard hung back, and the two near the carriage seemed paralysed with fear. Fortunately the suspicious gentlemen passed on, after scrutinizing our features, and examining with keen glances the state of our escort.

Relieved for the moment, we gave way to all kinds of abuse against our leading division, who, when this danger was past, came back with drawn swords, and rode by the side of the carriage. In an hour we were past the wood, and the escort came to be paid: this was done according to the original agreement, and all seemed satisfied. No sooner, however, had we begun to depart, than we remarked our body-guards in conversation, which terminated in their desiring the postilions to stop, and the whole ten advanced towards us. Very brief was the discourse; they insisted upon being paid another dollar each. To this I remonstrated; but I was shortly given to understand that, if I did not give what they asked, they would take every farthing we had. Of two evils we are taught to choose the least; so, with reluctant hand, I untied the bag of dollars we had carefully concealed, and paid our escort for



robbing us. They were not satisfied even then, but *begged* we would add five dollars more for *charity's* sake ; which having received, they laughed at their victims, and told the postilions to drive on.

It is due to our drivers to say, that they were, or appeared to be, more frightened than ourselves ; and certainly they did use all their influence with the mules, to get them into a quick pace ; but true it is, " the more haste the less speed." In their anxiety to clear us from our friends, they drove the carriage into a Mexican gutter, which was about the size of an English ditch, all nature being here on a grand scale : over went the carriage, and out we came by the window.

Like true Mexicans, instead of beginning to remedy the disaster, they began to cross themselves, and ejaculated their " Ave-Marias." Some time was lost before we righted our unwieldy machine ; and when we were again in readiness to advance, for the first time I suspected some treachery, for the postilions lingered long, and kept looking towards the spot where we had parted with our mendicant escort. The summary mode we adopted, of swearing by every saint in the calendar, that if they did not instantaneously proceed, we would shoot them, at the same time cocking and levelling the weapons, had the desired effect ; and in security, and without any other adventure, we arrived at Xalappa.

We now had the news confirmed of the Lively's departure ; and I, being anxious beyond all description to see Mexico, determined to make another attempt to reach the capital. We had had quite enough of carriages and escorts : we now resolved to ride the whole way ; and, having purchased three horses, borrowed a black servant, and sent our portmanteaus by the post, for my companion had now a trunk, we departed upon our gallant steeds, and advanced at a quick pace.

Our general average was forty-five miles a day, stopping at the same stages as we had formerly done, starting about an hour before daylight, resting two hours at noon, and arriving about sunset. We had no adventures worthy of remark, until we arrived at the Méson de Christo ; and

having been treated with one specimen of the dexterity of the angels, we resolved to be well on our guard. When we rode into the "Patio," a large yard, a whole generation of little cherubs accompanied us, to *assist* us with our trifling luggage. We were determined to unsaddle the horses ourselves, one at a time; the other two being unemployed, keeping a bright look-out; but, in spite of all our precautions, my companion lost his whip, and I had to fight for my cloak.

The next morning, at six o'clock, we were outside of the City of Angels. The general view of the country begins to improve immediately after leaving the Puebla. The high mountain of the Popocatepettle, 17,711 feet above the surface of the sea, and 11,156 feet above the level of the plain, is a magnificent sight. Cultivation was general, and the road much better: between Puebla and St. Martin, a distance of twenty-seven miles, *haciendas*\* are frequently met with; the villagers are neat and clean, and the whole view considerably enhanced.

We rode on to the Rio Frio, at a quick pace. Our servants had, either from laziness or fatigue, always latterly kept far behind us; and when we arrived at the inn, we had ample time to water and feed the horses, and rub them down, before Antonio appeared. To obviate this, I made him ride in advance; which hurt his feelings, as he said, for it implied a doubt of his honesty. By six the next morning we left the Rio Frio, the worst resting-place on the road; for we slept on the mud floor, and had not even a chair or a table.

It is a cold miserable situation, embosomed in a deep wood, on the highest part of the road, over which the traveller passes between Vera Cruz and the capital, being about 10,500 feet above the level of the sea. The river, from which the station takes its name, is a mere cold, running stream: it was frozen during the night.

The morning was bitterly cold, and many were the folds we took in our *mantas*. Antonio was placed in advance, and we started at a gallop; but after having kept him in that position for about half an hour, he declared

\* Haciendas are large farms.

his saddle-girths were loose, and he dismounted to tighten them, promising to overtake us. We saw no more of him until we arrived in Mexico.

We passed two carriages with strong escorts ; on seeing us, they halted, and drew up in a line of battle, allowing us room to pass : when we came close, we slackened our pace, and they prepared for action. I took the liberty of announcing, that we were not “ladrones ;” and after a civil salute we parted.

By half past nine we had cleared the wood, and one short turn brought us in sight of the valley of Mexico. On the left was Chalco and its lake ; on the right a cultivated country, divided by lakes, and studded with villages ; the whole circle, as far as the eye could reach, terminated in high and rugged mountains. From a place called Cordova, it is almost impossible to behold a finer view in any part of the world ; here we waited, and here we halloed for Antonio, the black : it was useless. About three o'clock we came upon the narrow causeway which divides the lake of Texuco, and Mexico was before us. The very idea of being within sight of the city compensated for all our troubles and all our fatigues ; it was a moment of excitement, only understood by those who have all their lives travelled to far distant places, and who consider themselves exalted in the scale of society, the more distant their researches, and the more strange the inhabitants.

The aspect of this city is beyond all imagination insignificant. It stands on a flat ; and is approached for fourteen miles on a perfect level : the consequence is, that only the outer line of houses is visible ; and the suburbs of Mexico are proverbially dirty and disgusting. By five o'clock we passed the barrier, and rode to the Calle de Canoa, in which street the son of my companion resided.

Mexico is, according to the *arrieros* (certainly the best judges), 102 leagues from Vera Cruz : it requires seven days' continued riding to perform the journey, which is always undertaken by daylight. I never remember to have heard the miserable inns disturbed after ten o'clock by the arrival of a traveller. Although robberies and

murders are by no means uncommon, it is a singular fact, that the *recuas* of mules, all laden with money, or valuable goods, are seldom attacked or plundered. Every ten mules have one man to protect them, and to replace the cargo, should it be forced on one side by coming in contact with another mule. These men, called *arrieros*, are the hardest, the stoutest, and the most laborious men in the country; to them the high or the low country is the same. Very few inhabitants accustomed to the sea-breeze of Vera Cruz, can bear the lighter and more rarefied atmosphere of Mexico, without being attacked by some pulmonary complaint; and the Mexicans can ill bear up against the oppressive heat of the coasts. The *arrieros* alone face the two dangers, alike distinguished for their hardihood and their honesty.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

ON entering the city, so eagerly sought, and so pleasant to behold, I was struck with astonishment at the dirty, filthy state of the suburbs, and the ragged, squalid appearance of the inhabitants. But soon this changed, and we came into the Plaza: here all was magnificence, all beauty; and here were concentrated the wealth, the government, the antiquities, the religion of the Mexicans. On the eastern side stands the cathedral; on the north, the Portal de las Flores; on the southern is the Government house or palace. On the west is a place called the Parian: this latter is the only part which would bear improvement, the houses being very low, and the resort of all the huxters and clothes-venders in the capital. The cathedral is beautifully placed, the architecture perfect, and the structure not like our modern lath-and-plaster building, but apparently built to last as long as the world exists. The palace of the Duke de Monte Leone, exiled after the revolution, stands on the spot formerly occupied by the palace of Montezuma; and the Government-house,

or the palace of the president, which is on the southern side, facing the Duke of Monte Leone's former abode, was esteemed by a very old traveller to be more of a royal residence than any palace in Europe: — to this I do not subscribe. It is a beautiful building, but cannot be mentioned with the royal palace at Stockholm, nor bear a comparison with the Imperial winter-residence in Petersburg.

I shall cut short all descriptions in a few words. The city in some parts is splendid, in others dirty and disgusting; the streets immediately in the neighbourhood of the square, or Plaza, are broad, regular, and handsome. The Calle Capuchinas might rival the Strada Balbi at Genoa; and few cities can boast of such streets as the Calle St. Francisco, or the Calle Plateros.

My companion, who hardly spoke a word of Spanish, got into a curious dilemma from the wording of a sentence; he had lost his way in the city, and was anxious to learn his proper path. He was on horseback, and a ragged Mexican kept close to his horse's head with a crucifix in his hand, which no doubt he wished to sell. As he importuned my friend excessively, and as he kept kissing the crucifix himself and then tried to poke it in the face of my companion, the latter soon lost his equanimity of temper, and stopped short to inquire his way, and to get rid of his persecutor. While he was bungling out the question concerning the road, the Mexican thrust the crucifix into the rider's face, and afterwards made signs for some money; this being interpreted as implying a wish to sell the article, my companion called out hastily — "No — no quere Jesu Christo." The whole street reverberated with the yell set up by the crowd; and had not the spur and the whip been called into requisition, a fatal result might have been the consequence.

They show every outward respect to the symbol of their religion. Independently of the obligation to walk bare-headed, should you be in the streets every day at noon, at three and at six o'clock, during the time the priests are saying the prayers for the dead, great care is requisite to pay proper respect whenever the carriage, which conveys the holy father who administers the sacred unction, passes

through the streets. This carriage, which is painted all over with religious subjects, and which is drawn by four piebald mules, is preceded by a man who carries a small bell, which is unceasingly tinkled as long as the carriage is in motion. Then came four men bearing long candles: by the side of the coach four boys marched, and chanted; four more men with lights brought up the rear. A number of troops always attended the procession to enforce order, obedience, and reverence; and every man, woman, and child, within sight of the carriage, on hearing the bell, are expected to fall on their knees, and so remain until the carriage may have passed, or the bell be inaudible. In spite, however, of the numerous cautions I had received relative to not daring to look into the interior of the sacred vehicle, I was resolved to satisfy my heretical curiosity, and saw all therein. A priest robed in white, holding a crucifix, with a boy in front of him, who held a candle in one hand, and supported an open book against his bosom with the other, was all I saw for my profanity. The processions not unfrequently lead to murders. During the time I remained in Mexico, an unfortunate foreign shoemaker, who was rapidly rising in wealth, owing to his perseverance and talent, omitted to kneel in his shop when the host passed. His next-door neighbour, a follower of the same line of business, after having paid his devotional respects, suddenly entered his neighbour's shop, and stabbed him to the heart. This was a truly laudable act: absolution unasked was given, the murdered was buried at Chipoltepec, and the murderer prospered for his piety!

On Christmas night, no less than six men were murdered, and left for public gaze the next morning in the great square opposite the Government-house. The Mexicans have become so used to these exhibitions, that they pass the lacerated dead with unfeeling calmness: more indifference could not be manifested by a Turk, when his friend is going to receive the bastinado; custom does certainly reconcile a man to many a strange sight.

The impartial distribution of justice where bigotry predominates, is a consummation devoutly to be wished, but which never occurs. In the house in which we resided

was an old fanatical woman, who hated us most cordially, and I trust without any other reason than that of a difference of creeds. She tried various modes of annoyance, all of which we managed to overcome ; and she in despair resorted to the very improper declaration, that we should be in bed by ten o'clock, or that we might sleep in the streets. Neither one nor the other suited our taste, and we resolved that neither the one nor the other should be put in force. It happened that the very next day we danced at some large party, and cards and conversation occupied our time until midnight. Returning home, we rapped at the large door — and rapped in vain ; at last, after many loud reproaches, a strange voice warned us to depart — that the key was up-stairs — and the door closed for the night. In answer to this, I mentioned my intention of applying a pistol to the lock, and saving the porter the trouble of going for the key. Antonio, hearing the noise, opened the window, and warned me not to fire, for that six armed men from the country were in the Patio, all ready for action, and preparing to fight. I desired him to make a *lasso* fast to the balcony and give me the end of it. With this our party soon got into our apartment, and prepared to take the enemy by surprise : our noise, however, warned them of our success, and they retired to rest, leaving us unmolested to do the same, after we had cautiously fastened and secured our doors.

The next morning we resolved to bring the case before the *alcalde*, and at the proper hour we appeared at the hall of justice. Our case was a very simple one : we only wanted to know if we were not allowed to enter our own house at any time we thought fit : strange as it may appear, there is great doubt on the subject ; for it is held by some, that the person to whom the house actually belongs, if she resides therein, has the right to close the door at ten o'clock to the exclusion of her lodgers. “ Very well ! ” quoth I, “ if you have a law, or if custom has made it a law, there is an end to that question ; but, pray tell me, by what right four or five men are placed in the yard, armed at all points, to shoot us if we venture to come in, and who were actually brought from the country for that purpose ? ”

"Why," replied the alcalde, "I do not exactly see what right you have to ask the question, because none of you were shot; and therefore you only surmise that you might have been shot."

"Very true, señor," I replied, "but they happened to present their muskets; and Antonio saw them too."

"Ah — but," replied the alcalde, "they did not shoot any of you."

"But supposing, señor, that they had shot one of us?"

"Ah, that indeed!" ejaculated the misnamed justice. "In that case," he continued, "the man so doing would have been fined a dollar; and had the deceased been a pauper, the murderer must have paid the burial expenses — you are heretics, you know!"

"What!" said I, "are heretics' lives only worth one dollar?"

"Quien sabe?" replied the alcalde, and turned to some more important case.

Throughout either the Mexican or the Columbian governments, these two words, "Quien sabe?" are used every minute of the day; the literal meaning is, "who knows?" In asking a question as to what hour it may be, "Quien sabe" is the reply. "How many leagues are we from the capital?" "Quien sabe," invariably was the answer.

The name of Justice is quite a by-word: the scales are never impartially held; and the sword often falls on the wrong neck. In cases of murder, the offender is not very hastily pursued; and, when brought to his trial, is never, provided he is rich, executed. In a city like Mexico, is it likely, if proper attention were paid by the police, and the alcaldes fearlessly performed their duty with impartiality, that foreigners would be obliged to walk about, armed like heavy dragoons? or would six or seven men have their throats cut on a holiday? or would murdered subjects be exposed before the palace, their bodies cruelly lacerated? or would the inhabitants ride about with a large knife stuck in their boots, to cut a *lasso*, should they be encircled? or would a man be obliged to get into the window of his own house, because an old bigoted harridan would not let him in at the door? or would any misnamed



Christian bring from the country his own servants, to murder the inmates of his sister's house? In Vera Cruz, between the 12th of January, 1826, and the 18th of the same month, ten gentlemen were murdered, and neither law nor justice pursued the assassins.

On my return to Vera Cruz, I was robbed by my own escort, and certainly had very nearly the pleasure of walking a long part of the way. I had ridden a considerable distance in advance of the carriage, and had taken up my night's quarters at the respectable inn of the Purissima Concepcion in Alcaxete; as usual, I laid my weary self upon a large bench, and placed my arms ready, in the event of any necessity to use them. I had with me a young Englishman, who had not been used to rough-riding, and who now, overcome by the fatigue of the long sultry ride, had fallen into a sound sleep by my side.

Weary and fatigued as I was, I could not fall asleep; there are times when the mind will not subside into forgetfulness, or the eyes close in slumber; some guardian angel kept me from repose, and I lay with my eyes and ears open and attentive. A little after midnight, I heard the voices of Spaniards, who, although they knew we were at the inn, did not know our room: the door opened into the courtyard, on the steps of which sat smoking and talking the premeditators of mischief: the conversation was, of course, in Spanish, but amounted to the following:—

“There are three of them, two *senhors* and one *criado* (servant); they all rode horses, and the animals are in the same stable as our mules.”

“It may be,” was the short reply.

“Are they English?” continued the first voice.

“Quien sabe,” was the answer.

“There can be no harm,” continued the gentleman of easy conscience, “in taking the horse of a heretic.”

“Not in the least,” was replied; and here followed an audible sigh, such as a man sometimes gets rid of after a whiff of tobacco.

“Well,” said the former, “suppose I drive the mules out, and you take the horses into the wood (the Pinal); do you think they will find them?”

“ Quien sabe.”

“ But do you think we can get off clear to-morrow with them ? ”

“ Quien sabe.”

“ Where can we sell them ? ”

“ Quien sabe.”

“ Do you think the Englishmen are asleep ? ”

“ Quien sabe.”

After much such a conversation, it was decided to rob the heretics, and forthwith I heard them walk away from the steps.

My companion, who was fast asleep, started into activity when he heard me fastening on my sabre, and fumbling with my pistols ; he was soon ready for action : and with a cautious hand I opened the door, to watch operations, before I commenced any hostile demonstration.

It was a fine clear night—not a noise to be heard, save now and then a grunting curse from the thieves as they moved the mules in the stable to make way for our horses to pass : the stable-door was exactly opposite to ours, and the light of the moon fell upon that side of the courtyard : so that we remained in our room unseen, whilst we had a good view of our enemies.

At last, after a considerable time had elapsed, I saw my black stallion coming out of the stable, followed very closely by the other two horses ; the foremost man held the *lasso* which secured the different animals, whilst the other thief crept along the wall to open the gate. I now began to think that my friends had gone far enough ; so, with very little courtesy, I walked over the way, seized the Spaniard by the collar, and trotted him and the horses into their proper places ; in the meantime my companion was making very determined signs of his eagerness to commit murder upon the “ Quien sabe ” gentleman, who was on the point of opening the gate.

“ Prepare to die, you vagabond scoundrel you, directly ! ” said the little fire-eater. “ What ! steal our horses, will you ? This is the last night you ever perform so vile a part. What are you doing at the gate, you villain ? ”

“ Quien sabe ! ” was the cool reply.

‘Go and help your vagabond companion in placing the horses in the stable, and then come out and be shot!’

The Spaniard walked away, struck a light for his cigar, and, after having placed the horses in their proper places, fastened the stable-door, and said, with the greatest coolness, “that they belonged to the house, and were only going to take the horses to water, knowing that we always departed early in the morning.”

“And where did you intend to sell them?” I asked.

“Quien sabe!” was the rejoinder.

The next morning they spread a report that we were going to steal their mules, and that they had detected us in the act of committing the theft. They could not even get any credit from their own countrymen.

In three days we were at Vera Cruz: the season had been unusually unhealthy, and the church-yard, or rather burial-ground, had scarcely a spare resting-place for the victims of the yellow fever. It was in one of my rambles that I witnessed the following scene:—

Struck by the appearance of the skulls, which are piled up exactly like shot in a garrison, I entered this Campo Santo, if so it can be called; and after gazing for some moments at the awful piles of bleached heads, which met the eye in every direction, and were convincing evidences of the fatal effects of the prevalent disorder, my attention was attracted by a loud laugh of a female, who was in conversation with two men digging a grave. I instantly turned to witness the operation, and, on nearing the spot, observed the workmen relinquishing their undertaking, as the grave was considered finished: it was so shallow, that it was evident that the body would scarcely be covered, and would half breed a pestilence from the putrid stench it would create in a very short time. “Why, my good friends!” said I, “this will never do; why, the man will be on a level with the ground,—his flesh will be visible.”

“And what if he is?” replied one of the grave-diggers; “the crows will soon finish him: look behind you!” he continued.

I did, and there saw the arm of a dead, and nominally

buried man, clear of his grave, with two crows sitting quietly and undisturbed as they tore the remaining flesh from the bone, and bolted the unsavoury meal.

The woman, who stood by the grave, seemed quite delighted at my disgust, and my endeavour to scare the intruders from so unhallowed a repast: no sooner had they flapped their lazy wings in the air, and lifted themselves from the almost bared arm, the fingers of which had served for a perch, than they seemed to "caw" a kind of defiance; and, lengthening their long legs, they touched the prey with their claws, whilst the flap of the wing kept them independent of support. I watched them with an anxious eye, as they again relaxed their idle efforts and settled on the arm, again dug their savage beaks into the flesh, and again strained their arched necks, as the tenacity of their food forced them to use their utmost strength.

Whilst I had been occupied in gazing on this horrid scene, the man destined for the shallow grave had been brought, and left in an open shell: he was perfectly naked, and had died, not of the yellow fever, but from a stab, apparently of a bayonet, a little below the heart. No priest attended to offer a last prayer for the poor man's benefit; no friend was to moisten the grave with the tear of affection; no wife, no child, no former companion appeared to weep for a loss they must have sustained, or to hallow the last act of humanity. On a tree hard by, some scavenger birds, with thirsty beaks, seemed eyeing the preparations, whilst the crows on the bared arm looked savagely on a fresher repast.

"My friend!" said I, addressing one of the men, who, without his shirt, had been toiling at the grave, "I will give you half a dollar if you dig this resting-place so deep that those black devils of birds shall be disappointed."

"And what if I do?" said he. "They only rob the cayotte\*; when the sun is down, deep or not deep, they will find him out."

"Will you dig it deeper for half a dollar?"

\* The cayotte is an animal not unlike a jackal, something between a wild dog and a fox.

With a lassitude common in those sultry countries, and after exchanging a word or two with the woman, whose eyes indicated any thing else but seriousness of thought, or affection at the scene, both workmen again began to deepen the grave; the pickaxe struck against something hard; and a skull was taken from the place, which one of the workmen rolled at the crows, which had left their prey, and had advanced nearer to us. They rose upon the wing, and passing close over our heads, settled near to the dead man. Even the woman was dismayed at the sight, and urged her child to go and scare them away; but the birds only walked about, and seemed to defy its efforts to turn them from their intentions.

The grave was not dug deep enough, but still as deep as they would dig it: and I awaited the *finale* of so degrading a sight. No dog could have been hurried to his grave with less ceremony, or been kicked from this world with less feeling. After having been seated for some moments, and amused themselves during that time in making love to the lady, they arose to finish the last act; one took the dead man by both hands, whilst the other grasped his feet, and in this manner brought him near the grave; he could not have been dead an hour, for the body hung down in all the flexibility of life, not a joint seemed stiffened: when within a yard of the spot, they swung the corpse backwards and forwards three times, one man saying with unfeeling mimicry, "Here is *something* for the father of the next world;" then throwing the body into the grave, gave a loud "ah!" and finished the ejaculation with thanking God that the labour was past.

It fell into the spot destined for its reception, with a dead and heavy sound: all that a day before was the image of God, was rolled into the dust of oblivion: no voice besides my own even said "Amen;" and the softer part of human nature, the woman, stood by with folded arms and heartless indifference. The child, that emblem of innocence, alone seemed conscious of the barbarity, and screamed to its unfeeling mother for protection; whilst the men hardened to the task from the frequent repetition, kicked the scanty dust over their companion,

and trampled upon him as he lay, a heap of flesh and bones — not even stretched in decent posture in his narrow grave.

Alas ! alas ! thought I, as I slowly retreated from the scene — is this the end of life ? Is it for this men toil, fight, slave, court the popular god, ambition — worship fortune ; and, from the cradle to the grave, torment themselves and their neighbours in some useless speculation or abortive scheme ? But yesterday, and that was a man moving in his own sphere ; perhaps the envy of some, and the friend of many : a drunken brawl, a hasty word, a ready dagger, and then a grave and forgetfulness ; and, alas ! what are we ? — the food of the birds which sing our requiem, and flap, with a kind of funereal noise, a dusky pall in their sable wings. When I arrived at the gate, long since broken from its hinges, I turned to look at the grave ; the woman and the child, the grave-digger and his companion, had gone ; and the first bird at the repast was stooping on its wing to drop upon the loose dirt which covered the corpse.

My companion in my Mexican trip took a passage in the packet for England, and I returned to Jamaica to report myself to the commander-in-chief. I was placed as a supernumerary on the books of the *Magnificent*, and very shortly after my return received my commission as commander of a ten-gun brig : vessels so admirably constructed as neither to be able to fight or fly, as occasion may require. They are the most useless class of vessels ever constructed, and which are admirably calculated to depress the courage of our seamen, and to heighten that of adversaries. There is not a ten-gun brig in the service which is a match for any smart American schooner with a long gun on board ; and what would be the cry if an English man-of-war brig was taken by a schooner ? The same remarks are applicable to the little, short, useless, leewardly class of ships called *Jack-ass frigates*, out of compliment to the proposer or builder, I know not which, of these deformed vessels. An American sloop of war ought to take them, to a certainty : and should we then survive the disgrace of losing a frigate in such an action ?

It was the evening preceding my departure in my new command, that I was dining in Kingston, at the house of a very celebrated physician and surgeon, alike known for his hospitality and his talent: we had divested ourselves of our lumbering coats, and were sitting in quiet comfort, enjoying the cool breeze of the land-wind, and refreshing nature with some slightly chilled claret.

"Massa, massa," said a black boy, who burst through the verandah in which we were regaling; "Massa, come quick, him wanted, *sar*. Massa Brown him dead, *sar* — him shot, *sar*, wid a pistol, *sar*."

"Get out, you black fool!" said the doctor; "if Mr. Brown is dead, I can be of no use. I can't bring a dead man to life, you booby! Who sent you?"

"Missy Brown, *sar* — him say, *sar*, him broder dead, *sar*, and wanted the doctor, *sar*. I really wish you come, *sar*. Missy quite frightened."

"Missy and you are two fools together: come, be off. If the boy was not killed, I might be of service; but to doctor the dead is both unprofitable and useless."

Away went blackey, and the doctor and myself were again left alone. "Surely," said I, "something must be the matter, or the boy never would have looked so frightened. Come, doctor, suppose you go and see."

"Not I, truly; it is very seldom that, throughout the year, I get a quiet and comfortable dinner. Some old blockhead pricks her finger in hemming her handkerchief, and then is monstrously surprised that we cut it off to prevent tetanus. It was but the other day that I got into my top-chaise\* to go to dinner, when a black girl came and told me her mistress was dying: I went, and found a young woman about twenty-five, who had by some carelessness run the needle into her thumb, and complained of pain running up her arm. Ten minutes after the clumsiness, she had only four fingers on her left hand!"

At this moment another clatter was heard, and in came a black boy, nearly white with fear.

"Massa say, *sar*, massa doctor come directly, that

\* A top-chaise is a kind of stanhope, with a head resting upon four upright iron supporters.

Massa Brown only dying; him no dead yet, sar — him shot through the head."

The doctor immediately prepared to visit his patient, and I went with him. On arriving at the door, we found a crowd collected, crying and bewailing. Some of the little black girls seemed half frantic; and while the doctor was arranging his dignified looks, I sprang up stairs, and in a moment was in the fatal room.

On the floor, in the centre, was a white boy of about fourteen years of age, stretched out as if dead. Around him stood about sixteen or seventeen black and mulatto women, all drooping their heads, and in tears. On seeing me, they made an opening, and I knelt down by the side of the boy's head to inspect the wound. The ball had entered the left temple, and the brains were oozing through the orifice. The body was occasionally convulsed; the haggard features were indicative of the approach of death, whilst the gurgling in the throat, and the glassy fixture of the eyes, confirmed my worst apprehensions. By this time the doctor, who had dropped his hat in the hurry, and had been in search of it, entered the room; and as he came to me, I said in a low tone, "It is no use, the boy is on the point of death." The blacks caught the sound, and cried most piteously: "Oh, massa Charlie, no leave us, sar — no leave us, sar — look up, massa Charlie."

With some difficulty, the doctor procured a razor, and began to shave the head near the wound; but no sooner had he inspected the place, than he left the boy flat on his back; and as he rose, said, "He is dying, and will be dead in a moment." The jaw began to droop, the noise in the throat ceased, and a pin might have been heard to fall, notwithstanding the crowd in the room. At this instant a slight shudder affected the boy — a shiver previous to death. The blacks rushed to the body, and each endeavoured to get her mouth over the dying boy's; and each, as she neared his lips, started up and cried, "I have it — I have it!" meaning that she had caught his soul! The boy stiffened into death, and his misery was over. The servants now commenced a loud bewailing,



very similar to the low howl of the Irish. They tossed their aprons in the air, and gave vent to their feelings in their usual wild manner : but it was evident that the slaves wept for the loss of their young master ; and the grief they expressed was decisive of the dead never having tyrannised over his servants, but that he had used them with kindness and regard.

The accident arose from a hasty word. One brother was in the habit of tormenting the other. The father happened to say, " Why, Tom, don't you shoot him ? " Upon which the son took down a pistol and cocked it. " Take care," said the father, " it is loaded."

" Will you leave me alone, Charlie? or I will shoot you."

Charlie still continued to plague him ; the brother advanced within a yard, and firing, shot him through the forehead.

As I have, and had, a mortal antipathy to a coroner's inquest, I left the house, ran to my boat, rowed down to Port Royal, and the next morning at daylight was standing out of the harbour through the leeward passage, bound to St. Jago de Cuba.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

I KNOW many men in the navy, who have served their years and years afloat, who have passed through the rugged life of a sailor, untouched by the enemy, and unhurt by misfortune. How true it is, " that in the midst of life we are in death ! " that the very moment of intoxicating joy may be our last of existence ; and the instant of the greatest apparent security, the date of our death ; how vain are all our precautions against the unerring hand of fate !

The Magpie, a small schooner under the command of Lieutenant Smith, an active, intelligent officer, was ordered to cruise between the Colorados, a shoal at the western extremity of the island of Cuba, and the Havannah, in

order to intercept a piratical vessel, which had committed innumerable depredations both on shore and at sea, and which every trader had seen, but none could accurately describe. It was a service of the utmost importance, inasmuch as the existence of this vessel rendered higher insurances requisite; the merchant-vessels dared not to sail without a convoy, and the men-of-war were otherwise in great request in every part of Columbia and Mexico, to protect the merchant from the rapacity of the different governments, or the constant revolutions which threw the weak entirely on the power of the strongest, without a chance of assistance.

The Magpie proceeded to her destination, and there remained, in hopes of capturing the marauder. It was one evening, when the sea-breeze had lulled, and the calm in being which occurs before the land-breeze commences, that the schooner lay upon the silent waters without a motion, with her head towards the shore, and about eight miles distant from the Colorados. Smith, who had swept the horizon with his glass from the mast-head of his charge, until the twilight had died into darkness, was in his cabin, the mate on deck, the crew talking over past scenes and occurrences, every thing apparently in the most perfect security, when an event occurred, which I well know I cannot paint in the glowing colours the heart-rending tale deserves.

It is requisite here to mention, that the schooner had her fore-topsail set, the yard being braced for the starboard tack; the fore-sail was in the brails, and the jib and boom mainsail, the latter with the tack triced up, hanging up and down in the calm. On the larboard bow a small black cloud had hung over the land; and in tropical climates, almost invariably, the clouds settling on the hills is the sign of the land-breeze being about to commence. Perhaps many of my readers have not been in these climates, where the blessings of the cool night-breeze must be felt to be appreciated; generally speaking, the land-wind comes on in light flaws, until it settles into its strength, which is rarely sufficient to drive a frigate at the rate of five knots an hour.

No one can guess with what impatience the navigator, who has been beating all day against the sea-breeze and current, awaits the arrival of his fair wind, and cooling breeze, which is to give him renewed existence by its bracing qualities, and to forward him towards his port. It is a blessing eagerly sought after, and heartily welcome when it comes.

The cloud, which at first seemed only of small dimensions, gradually increased ; and the moon, which was shining brightly just over the vapour, perhaps made it appear darker than it really was. The mate looked at the gathering blackness without apprehension, although some foreboding of approaching mischief seemed to render him unquiet and uneasy.

"Mr. Smith," said the mate, looking down the hatchway ; "I think the land-breeze is coming off rather strong, sir ; the clouds look very black."

"Very well," replied Smith ; "keep a sharp look-out. I shall be on deck myself in a moment."

It is proper for the historian of all misfortunes to show how, by cautious attention, such misfortunes might have been guarded against. When the mate observed the increasing blackness and density of the cloud, he ought to have braced the fore-yard round, and thus to have prevented the schooner being taken *aback* ; for there are no vessels so ticklish (as we call it) as schooners, and no yards so difficult to manage in a squall, as the long overgrown yard for a schooner's fore-topsail, or square-sail. Had this slight manœuvre been executed, the horrible consequences which ensued might have been obviated ; at any rate, the men ought to have been kept in readiness, the fore-topsail should have been furled, or lowered, and preparations to meet any circumstances ought to have been made.

It is a singular fact, that the crew, who had been engaged in relating all kinds of wonderful events about five minutes before the catastrophe occurred, became awfully silent ; not a word escaped them : there seemed a preparatory stillness for death itself, or a respectful fear at its approach.

A squall of wind, which must have been fearfully strong, seemed to burst from the cloud alongside the schooner ; it reached her before the mate could call the watch into activity. The vessel was taken aback ; and Mr. Smith, as he put his foot upon the last step of the ladder, found his schooner upset, and scarcely had he time to reach the deck, before she sunk, to rise no more.

The crew, amounting in all to twenty-four, happened luckily to be on deck, with the exception of two, who were drowned in the schooner ; and in one minute they found themselves struggling in the water—their home, their ship, and some of their companions, lost for ever. The wild cry for assistance from some, of surprise from others, and fear from all, seemed to drown the wind ; for, as if sent by Providence to effect this single event, no sooner had the schooner sunk, than the wind entirely ceased, a calm came on, and the bright rays of the moon fell upon the wet faces of the struggling crew—most fortunately, as some would think, but in reality the most painfully unfortunate from what followed : the boat on the booms of the schooner floated clear of the sinking vessel, and seemed prepared for their salvation ; the fore-yard-arm had somehow got fixed on the gunwale, and as the schooner sunk, it naturally heeled the boat, until she was nearly upset, and half full of water, when the yard got disentangled, the schooner sunk, and the boat floated.

The only ark of their safety was amply large enough to have saved the twenty-two men, who instantly swam to her ; and such was the impetuosity occasioned by their fright, that prudence was overlooked : and in the hurried exertion of eight or ten endeavouring to scramble in, all on one side, the half-filled boat heeled below her gun-wale in the water, and rolled over and over ; some got across her keel—the others held on by her—and all were saved from drowning.

Mr. Smith, who appears to have been a man of most consummate command and coolness, began to reason with his crew on the impossibility of their being saved, if they continued in their present position ; for those who were on the keel would shortly roll off, and exertion and fatigue

would soon force the others to relinquish their holds, or urge them to endeavour forcibly to dislodge the possessors from their quiet seats. He pointed out the necessity of righting the boat, of allowing only two men to get in her to bale her out, whilst the others, supported by the gun-wales, which they kept upright, might remain in the water until the boat was in such a condition as to receive two more; and thus by degrees to ship the whole crew in security.

Even in this moment of peril, the discipline of the navy assumed its command. At the order from the lieutenant for the men on the keel to relinquish their position, they instantly obeyed, the boat was turned over, and once more the expedient was tried—but quite in vain; for no sooner had the two men begun to bale with a couple of hats, and the safety of the crew to appear within the bounds of probability, than one man declared he saw the fin of a shark.

No language can convey the panic which seized the struggling seamen; a shark is at all times an object of horror to a sailor; and those who have seen the destructive jaws of these voracious fish, and their immense and almost incredible power—their love of blood, and their bold daring to obtain it—alone can form an idea of the sensations produced to a swimmer by the cry of “a shark! a shark!”

Every man now struggled to obtain a moment's safety. Well they knew that one drop of blood would have been scented by the everlasting pilot-fish, the jackalls of the shark; and that their destruction was inevitable, if one only of these monsters should discover the rich repast, or be led to its food by the little rapid hunter of its prey. All discipline was now unavailing; the boat again turned keel up; one man only gained his security, to be pushed from it by others; and thus their strength began to fail from long-continued exertion. As, however, the enemy so much dreaded did not make its appearance, Smith once more urged them to endeavour to save themselves by the only means left, that of the boat; but as he knew that he would only increase their alarm by endeavouring to per-

suade them that sharks did not abound in those parts, he used the wisest plan of desiring those who held on by the gunwale, to keep splashing in the water with their legs, in order to frighten the monsters at which they were so alarmed.

Once more had hope begun to dawn ; the boat was clear to her thwarts, and four men were in her, hard at work : a little forbearance and a little obedience, and they were safe. At this moment, when those in the water urged their messmates in the boat to continue baling with unremitted exertion, a noise was heard close to them, and about fifteen sharks came right in amongst them. The panic was ten times more dreadful than before : the boat again was upset by the simultaneous endeavour to escape the danger ; and the twenty-two sailors were again devoted to destruction.

At first the sharks did not seem inclined to seize their prey, but swam in amongst the men, playing in the water, sometimes leaping about and rubbing against their victims. This was of short duration — a loud shriek from one of the men announced his sudden pain : a shark had seized him by the leg, and severed it entirely from the body. No sooner had the blood been tasted, than the long-dreaded attack took place ; another and another shriek proclaimed the loss of limbs ; some were torn from the boat, to which they vainly endeavoured to cling — some, it was supposed, sunk from fear alone — all were in dreadful peril.

Mr. Smith, even now, when of all horrible deaths the most horrible seemed to await him, gave his orders with clearness and coolness ; and, to the everlasting honour of the poor departed crew be it known, they were obeyed : again the boat was righted, and again two men were in her. Incredible as it may appear, still however it is true, that the voice of the officer was heard amidst the danger ; and the survivors actually, as before, clung to the gunwale, and kept the boat upright. Mr. Smith himself held by the stern, and cheered and applauded his men. The sharks had tasted the blood, and were not to be driven from their feast ; in one short moment, when Mr. Smith ceased splashing, as he looked into the boat to watch its progress,

a shark seized both his legs, and bit them off just above the knees. Human nature was not strong enough to bear the immense pain without a groan ; but Smith endeavoured to conceal the misfortune ; nature, true to herself, resisted the endeavour, and the groan was deep and audible. The crew had long respected their gallant commander ; they knew his worth and his courage ; on hearing him express his pain, and seeing him relinquish his hold to sink, two of the men grasped their dying officer, and placed him in the stern sheets. Even now, in almost insupportable agony, that gallant fellow forgot his own sufferings, and thought only of rescuing the remaining few from the untimely grave which awaited them ; he told them again of their only hope, deplored their perilous state, and concluded with these words : “ If any of you survive this fatal night, and return to Jamaica, tell the admiral (Sir Laurence Halsted) that I was in search of the pirate when this lamentable occurrence took place ; tell him I hope I have always done my duty, and that I ——” here the endeavour of some of the men to get into the boat gave her a heel on one side ; the men who were supporting poor Smith relinquished him for a moment, and he rolled overboard and was drowned. His last bubbling cry was soon lost amidst the shrieks of his former companions—he sunk to rise no more. Could he have been saved, his life would have been irksome ; and, but for the time which even the best desire to make atonement for the sins and errors of early life—to offer their contrite prayers to the throne of grace—to implore that salvation we all hope for, and none of themselves can claim—he had better have died as he did, than live to be dependent on others ;—to hear the peevish complaint of his attendants, or to sigh for pleasures he could never enjoy, or for comforts he could never obtain. With him died every hope ; all but two of the crew gave way to loud execrations and cursings. Some, who had not been so seriously injured by the monsters of the deep, endeavoured to get upon the keel of the boat, which was again upset ; but worn out with excessive fatigue, and smarting under the keen pain, they gave up the chance of safety, and were either eaten immediately by the sharks, or court-

ing death, which appeared inevitable, they threw themselves from their only support, and were drowned.

At eight o'clock in the evening the Magpie was upset ; it was calculated by the two survivors, that their companions had all died by nine. The sharks seemed satisfied for the moment ; and they with gallant hearts resolved to profit by the precious time in order to save themselves : they righted the boat, and one getting over the bows, and the other over the stern, they found themselves, although nearly exhausted, yet alive, and in comparative security ; they began the work of baling, and soon lightened the boat sufficiently not to be easily upset, when both sat down to rest. The return of the sharks was the signal for their return to labour. The voracious monsters endeavoured to upset the boat : they swam by its side in seeming anxiety for their prey ; but, after waiting some time, they separated — the two rescued seamen found themselves free from their insatiable enemies, and, by the blessing of God, saved. Tired as they were, they continued their labour until the boat was nearly dry, when both lay down to rest, the one forward and the other aft : so completely had fear operated on their minds, that they did not dare even to move, dreading that an incautious step might again have capsized the boat. They soon, in spite of the horrors they had witnessed, fell into a sound sleep — and day had dawned before they awoke to horrible reflections, and apparently worse dangers.

The sun rose clear and unclouded, the cool calm of the night was followed by the sultry calm of the morning ; and heat and hunger, thirst and fatigue, seemed to settle on the unfortunate men, rescued by Providence and their own exertions from the jaws of a horrible death. They awoke and looked at each other — the very gaze of despair was appalling : far as the eye could reach, no object could be discerned ; the bright haze of the morning added to the strong refraction of light ; one smooth interminable plain, one endless ocean, one cloudless sky, and one burning sun were all they had to gaze upon. The boat lay like the ark, in a world alone ! They had no oar, no mast, no sail — nothing but the bare planks and themselves,



without provisions or water, food or raiment. They lay upon the calm ocean, hopeless, friendless, miserable. It was a time of intense anxiety ; their eyes rested upon each other in silent pity, not unmixed with fear. Each knew the dreadful alternative to which nature would urge them. The cannibal was already in their looks, and fearful would have been the first attack on either side, for they were both brave and stout men, and equals in strength and courage.

" 'Tis a bad business this, Tom," said the man on the bow—" a very bad business indeed : I think I am sorry I was not eaten by the sharks with the rest of the poor fellows, and then I should never have known the misery of this moment."

" I have been," replied Jack, " in many a heavy squall before now ; but I never felt such a gale as this—no hope, Tom, none ! Here we are, doomed to die of thirst and hunger !—nothing to eat, you know, Tom, nothing !" The word " nothing" was repeated by Tom, who afterwards continued the conversation :— " Well, boy, many's the ship that passes through the Gulf of Florida, and which must come nearly within hail of us : so that if we, or one of us, can but live a little—and I *dare say we can find food for one*— why, then, you know, the whole story will be told, and that will be something."

" Food for one !" re-echoed the other, and advanced a little towards his only companion, with a look of savage determination. Both understood the allusion : there was no doubt but that they could have outlived the day without resorting to the last resource : but they stood afraid of each other. Both had knives, for sailors always carry these instruments suspended to their necks by a strong piece of white line, which they call a lanyard. Although not driven to the dreadful alternative, they anticipated the worst results ; they knew they could not both long survive the awful situation in which they were placed. If no ship passed them within four-and-twenty hours, it was evident that one must have been murdered to save the other.

In all times of tribulation and danger, men turn their

thoughts to God, and solicit that support for which when in health and security they had omitted to pray. There is a delightful calm which generally comes over the mind of the most hardened after they have been induced to pray for support and forgiveness ; and few there are who, having once experienced the consolations of religion, totally abandon it afterwards. In the situation in which the two men were placed, they had not even the comfort of employment, for they had nothing to employ themselves upon : all they could do, was, or could be done, in a second — namely, when the sea-breeze came to place a thwart upright with a jacket upon it in the bows of the boat, and scud before the wind ; in which case, if they could exist four or five days, they might reach the western shore of the Gulf of Mexico.

The man abaft fell upon his knees, and, lifting his clasped hands to heaven, silently began his prayer. The throb of religion reached the heart of his companion, who, fearing to approach too near the only human being he was likely to see again, knelt down on the fore part of the boat ; and thus, in silence, they prayed for support, and a happy issue out of all their afflictions.

It was now about half-past six in the morning : the sun was beginning to prove its burning power, the sea was as smooth as a looking-glass ; and, saving now and then the slight cat's-paw of air, which ruffled the face of the water for a few yards, all was calm and hushed. In vain they strained their eyes—in vain they turned from side to side to escape the burning rays of the sun : they could not sleep, for now anxiety and fear kept both vigilant and on their guard ; they dared not to court sleep, for that might have been the last of mortal repose. Once, they nearly quarrelled, but fortunately the better feelings of humanity overcame the bitterness of despair. The foremost man had long complained of thirst, and had frequently dipped his hand into the water, and sucked the fluid : this was hastily done, for all the horrors of the night were still before them, and not unfrequently the sharp fin of a shark was seen not very far from the boat. In the midst of the excruciating torments of thirst, heightened by the salt-water,

and the irritable temper of the bowman, as he stamped his impatient foot against the bottom boards, and tore his hair with unfeeling indifference, he suddenly stopped the expression of his rage, and called out—"By G—d, there is a sail!" The extravagance of joy was now equal to the former despair; they jumped into each other's arms—they laughed and cried together. It was a sail, a brig which had a light breeze aloft, and was steering exactly in their direction. Every means of making a signal was resorted to: one stood upon the thwart and flung his jacket in the air; whilst the other, although the stranger was miles distant, endeavoured to hail her. Sometimes they hailed together, in order to produce a louder sound, and occasionally both stood up to make some signal. Their eyes were never off the brig: they thought no longer of the burning sun, or of hunger or of thirst; deliverance was at hand, at least so they flattered themselves, and no time of greatest joy could have beat the excitement and gratification of that moment. Whilst they stood watching in silence the approach of the brig, which slowly made her way through the water, — and at the very instant that they were assuring each other that they were seen, and that the vessel was purposely steered on the course she was keeping to reach them,—the whole fabric of hope was destroyed in a second; the brig kept away about three points, and began to make more sail. Then was it an awful moment: their countenances saddened as they looked at each other; for in vain they hailed—in vain they threw their jackets in the air—it was evident they had never been seen, and that the brig was steering her proper course.

Both now attempted to break adrift one of the fixed thwarts; the loose ones had been lost during the night; and although, as all may fancy, every muscle was exerted, and all the strength nature had given them pushed to its utmost, yet were they insufficient in power to succeed. Their object was to use two of these thwarts as paddles, and to edge down at an angle from the course of the brig; so that they would, if they did not reach her, at any rate pass so near, as to be certain of being seen. This last was a sad disappointment; but, sailor like, they would not

despair while hope was in sight : they endeavoured, by heeling the boat on one side, to propel her by their hands : but they were soon worn out with fatigue, and obliged to relinquish the attempt ; for, independently of the impossibility of success in such an undertaking, they lost the better opportunity of being seen from the vessel.

It was after a long deep sigh from the man in the stern sheets, and after wiping away a stream of tears as he looked at the vessel, then about two miles and a half distant, that he broke into a loud lamentation on the utter hopelessness of their condition if they were not seen. In vain they declared that the brig had purposely altered her course to avoid them — in vain they pointed to a man going aloft, whom they could distinctly see — and in vain they waved their jackets, and assisted the signal with speech. The time was slipping away, and if once they got abaft the beam of the brig, every second would lessen the chance of being seen ; besides, the sea-breeze might come down, and then she would be far away, and beyond all hope in a quarter of an hour. Now was it that the man who had been so loudly lamenting his fate, seemed suddenly inspired with fresh hope and courage : he looked attentively at the brig, then at his companion, and said — “ By heaven, I’ll do it, or we are lost ! ”

“ Do what ? ” said his shipmate.

“ Though,” said the first man, “ it is no trifle to do, after what we have seen and known ; yet I will try, for if she passes us, what can we do ? I tell you, Jack, I’ll swim to her : if I get safe to her, you are saved ; if not, why I shall die without adding, perhaps, murder to my crimes.”

“ What ! jump overboard, and leave me all alone ! ” replied his companion : “ look, look at that shark, which has followed us all night — why, it is only waiting for you to get in the water to swallow you, as it did perhaps half of our messmates : — no, no — wait, do wait, perhaps another vessel may come ; besides, I can’t swim half the distance, and I should be afraid to remain behind : think, Tom — only think of the sharks, and of last night.”

This appeal staggered the determination of the gallant

fellow. There, about twenty yards from the boat was the fin of the shark, and now and then another and another might be seen: he looked at his enemies, and then at himself. Certain death awaited him in the boat, perhaps heightened by crime; a chance of death awaited him in the sea; but there was hope to buoy him up — the time was flying, the breeze had begun to freshen a little, the brig was fast advancing, and hope was every minute growing less.

“ Well,” said he, “ Jack, it comes to this, you see, that if we wait we *must* die,— if I get to the brig we must be saved. If the sharks—God Almighty protect me!” said he, shuddering as he mentioned the word — “ should take me, and you live to get back again, you know where to remember me. I say, Jack, it’s no use being frightened to death when we can but die: come, give us your hand, my last companion. I’ll do it, if it is to be done. Good-bye:—now, if you see those devils in chase of me, splash, or make some noise to frighten them, but don’t tell me you see them coming. Another shake of the hand — God bless you, Jack! keep your eye upon me, and make signals to the brig:—there,” said he, putting his knife down, “ that *might* be of use to you, and here’s my toggery. If I am taken, it’s none the better for last night’s swim.” Then falling on his knees, and saying, “ God protect me!” he jumped overboard with as much calmness as if he was bathing in security. No sooner had he begun to strike out in the direction he intended, than his companion turned towards the sharks. The fins had disappeared, and it was evident they had heard the splash, and would soon follow their prey. It is hard to say who suffered the most anxiety. The one left in the boat cheered his companion, looked at the brig, and kept waving his jacket — then turned to watch the sharks: his horror may be imagined when he saw three of these terrific monsters swim past the boat, exactly in the direction of his companion: he splashed his jacket in the water, to scare them away, but they seemed quite aware of the impotency of the attack, and lazily pursued their course.

The man swam well and strongly. There was no doubt

he would pass within hail of the brig, provided the sharks did not interfere; and he, knowing that they would not be long in following him, kept kicking the water and splashing as he swam. There is no fish more cowardly, and yet more desperately savage, than a shark. I have seen one harpooned twice, with a hook in its jaws, and come again to a fresh bait: yet will they suffer themselves to be scared by the smallest noise, and hardly ever take their prey without it is quite still. Generally speaking, any place surrounded by rocks where the surf breaks, although there may be a passage for a ship, will be secure from sharks. It was not until a great distance had been accomplished, that the swimmer became apprised of his danger, and saw by his side one of the terrific creatures: still, however, he bravely swam, and kicked; his mind was made up for the worst, and he had little hope of success. In the mean time the breeze had gradually freshened, and the brig passed with greater velocity through the water; every stitch of canvass was spread. To the poor swimmer the sails seemed bursting with the breeze; and as he used his utmost endeavour to propel himself, so as to cut off the vessel, the spray appeared to dash from the bow, and the brig to fly through the sea. He was now close enough to hope his voice might be heard; but he hailed and hailed in vain — not a soul was to be seen on deck: the man who steered was too intent upon his avocation to listen to the call of mercy. The brig passed, and the swimmer was every second getting farther in the distance: every hope was gone, not a ray of that bright divinity remained: the fatigue had nearly exhausted him, and the sharks only waited for the first quiet moment to swallow their victim.

It was in vain he thought of returning towards the boat, for he never could have reached her, and his companion had no means of assisting him. In the act of offering up his last prayer ere he made up his mind to float and be eaten, he saw a man look over the quarter of the brig: he raised both his hands; he jumped himself up in the water, and, by the singularity of his motions, fortunately attracted notice. A telescope soon made clear the object: the brig

was hove-to, a boat sent, and the man saved. The attention of the crew was then awakened to the Magpie's boat: she was soon alongside: and thus, through the bold exertions of as gallant a fellow as ever breathed, both were rescued from their perilous situation.

At first the dreadful tale was discredited; and the American captain rather fancied the addition to his crew to be two pirates, who had, to avoid a surer death, put to sea in an oarless, mastless, sailless boat. They were landed at the Havannah, and then conveyed to Port-Royal in the first man-of-war.

Such were the sufferings and the deaths of the crew of the unfortunate Magpie; and these facts were related to the officers composing the court-martial which sat upon the two remaining men. The story was told with unaffected modesty; and he who had so generously risked his life to save his messmate, could not be prevailed upon to tell that part which solely related to himself; but when the truth was out, and his messmate had done ample justice to the heroic act, they both burst into tears in the court, and ran into each other's arms. There was not a man in that court, either as captain or crew, who did not show how quickly the feelings of sailors can be touched, and how alive they are to recording a generous and manly act.

The survivors were both strongly recommended for promotion; and the recommendation was not in vain—a few short months saw them warrant officers; and when I left that station some years afterwards, these two men had gained the confidence and esteem of their commanding officers, who found them sober, attentive, and alert in doing their duties: and thus it sometimes happens that the most unfortunate circumstances are the best roads to promotion and contentment.

Strictly speaking, this anecdote has no business in *my Life*; but it is a scene in a sailor's life, and such a one as is not easily forgotten. I shall now introduce my readers to some small conviviality which occurred rather farther to windward than the island of Cuba; for I do not mean

to leave a track by which any one may hunt me up ; and henceforth the scenes will be detached, without any regard to time or dates.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE absence, or the scarcity, in these colonies of those many and varied amusements that in other countries minister to the public appetite, occasions a proportionable degree of excitement among the colonists, whenever a circumstance occurs to bring them together in pursuit of pleasure. Balls and dinner-parties are the principal, almost the only, occasions of these public solemnities ; and every charitable allowance is to be made for the devotion with which the votaries of Terpsichore and Bacchus fulfil the rites of their respective deities.

The ball-room is the scene of action, where the long pent-up sympathies of the fair dancers of the West are released from the thralldom of that monotony which the climate impresses on their general habits. In the unrepressed animation of spirit, and untiring activity and joyousness of movement which the occasion calls forth, it would be difficult to recognise any of that diffidence and reserve so naturally engendered by the retirement of a Creole lady's life.

The pleasures of dancing are nowhere more thoroughly appreciated than in this country ; and in no civilised society is this enjoyment less alloyed with envy and rivalry.

The spirit of the fair dancers is proof against the yawning of parents or aged chaperones, and even the melting appeal of the early beams of a tropical sun ; and when the ungracious *fiat* of departure could no longer be resisted, many a fair form has slowly retreated with excited looks, and many a bright eye drooped in silent but touching sorrow over the scene of their still unsated enjoyment.

A dinner-party is equally redolent of excitement and



enjoyment, though of a somewhat different character. C. had been prepared for the novelty of the event, and arrived at the house of feasting in full anticipation of much amusement. He was greeted at the door by his friend Mr. Peters, clothed in scarlet and buff, as captain of the militia; and who, as one of the stewards of the festival, conducted C. down a long room, having a table garnished for the accommodation of sixty or eighty people, into a sort of waiting-room, where huge goblets of punch and sangaree invited the guests to the usual preliminary libations.

There was something appalling in this initiatory rite—it seemed typical of the absolute submersion that was to follow; and C. slowly, and with some trepidation, obeyed the repeated and cordial invitations to taste the contents of one of these mighty reservoirs. The punch, however, proved excellent; as how could it be otherwise, when capital old rum, and limes fresh from the tree, formed its basis? The guests rapidly dropped in after C., and the punch and sangaree as rapidly waned in the crystal goblets. The manner of treating the subject was, to the judicious observer, characteristic of the individual. The Irishman occasionally gulped down an incautious allowance, with an air of supreme defiance; others of that class diffidently sipped a modest portion; the man of habitual thirst took a long and hearty pull—at once doing homage to the generous liquor, and expressing his confidence of his capacity for all that might follow; while the steady and experienced old proser planted his thumb-nail on the outside of the glass, and at a certain depth below the surface of its contents, and drank down to the prescribed mark with admirable exactitude. Symptoms of drought were appearing, and a jovial steward had issued orders of replenishment. New sluices were about to be opened, when a band, stationed in the verandah, struck up “God save the King:” the hum of voices ceased—the measured tread of a multitude was heard above the martial notes, and His Honour the President entered, accompanied by six aides-de-camp, the commandant and staff of the garrison, and several civil as well as military functionaries: dinner was immediately

served, and the party proceeded with due state to occupy their places at the table.

Colonel H. assumed the presidential chair, having on his right the "Commander-in-chief;" a portly, handsome man, the naturally jovial expression of whose countenance was somewhat tempered and restrained by a just sense of official dignity. On the chairman's left sat the worthy major, with that sort of quiet sober certainty of happiness in his visage usually acquired by those who have been frequently accustomed to sit at "good men's feasts." Official dignitaries ranged right and left of these worthies; while divines, planters, lawyers, merchants, soldiers, militiamen, and other guests, whose avocations could not be precisely defined, completed the arrangement of the table. Captain Peters, at the foot of the genial board, presided over the lower regions.

Betsy Carter, the venerable mulatto priestess of this solemn festival, had faithfully discharged her duties. Turtles from the most celebrated quays in the neighbourhood had been for some time in private training for the occasion, and now appeared as soup in huge tureens, or as calipash and calipee in weighty tin dishes of the size and fashion of ancient coal-scuttles.

There was no lack of fish, both various and excellent, out of the abundance of the sea-coast; and rounds of English beef, and joints of well-approved Nevis mutton, completed the substantial portion of the feast. Turkeys, geese, ducks, and guinea-birds, interspersed with that peculiarly indigenous luxury, the land-crab, were among the lighter affairs. Irish potatoes (almost esteemed a luxury), yams, plantains, ochios, the Jamaica bean, pigeon-pea, and the mountain-cabbage — the most delicate, delicious, and costly of all vegetables — and pastry of those fruits that in England are deemed both rich and rare, helped abundantly to furnish out the feast.

These excellent matters were discussed with all due gravity, and in silence that was only interrupted by the clatter of knives and forks, the grinding of masticators, and the occasional interchange of bibulous compliments.

"Will your Honour take punch after your turtle? —

Major, will you join his Honour and myself in a glass of punch ? ”

“ Glass of wine, Mr. President ? ”

“ With all my heart.”

“ Boy, bring some madeira — the yellow cork (*aside*) — now take it to the President, and when he has helped himself, bring it again — you understand ? ”

“ Yes, massa,” with a grin of intelligence.

“ Titus, a glass of porter.”

“ Reverend, I’ll join you, if you please.”

“ Titus, two glasses — one to Dr. Bowes.”

“ Reverend, your good health.”

“ Sir, I thank you.”

“ Boy, go and tell that gentleman at the other end of the table I shall be happy to take wine with him.”

“ Which gentleman, massa ? ”

“ Next to Colonel Magoree ”

“ Dis side ’Torney-General, massa ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Massa C., Captain Peters say, ’pose you take wine wi’ him.”

“ Madeira or claret, sir ? ”

“ Which you please, sir.”

“ Name, it sir.”

“ Claret, if you please.”

“ Tom, any swizzle ? ”

“ Yes, massa.”

“ Bring me some.”

“ After you, sir.”

“ Simpson, here’s some excellent pale ale ; will you join Peters and me ? ”

“ Colonel, I recommend a glass of barsac. Mr. Solicitor-General will perhaps join us ? ” &c.

Towards the middle of the feast, champagne was produced, and passed briskly round the table.

“ Collector,” said a bilious-looking wag, holding up a glass of the contraband liquor, and cocking his eye cunningly at the Receiver of Customs, “ a glass of perry ? ”

“ Ha ! ha ! with all my heart. Major, don’t wait for me.”

The by-acting of the servants during these ceremonies

was not without its appropriate character. There might be about twenty in attendance, all decently attired, as is customary in the old colonies, but in various costumes. Some in stately liveries, more guarded than those of their fellows ; others with merely a livery coat, and the rest of their accoutrements for the " working day ; " and here and there the cast-off habiliments of the master gave " a shabby-genteel " air to Hector, or Demosthenes ; full suits of white, however, prevailed more generally. The contests between the servants to answer the several demands of their masters would occasionally interrupt the solemnity of the feast.

" Hector, where you get dat wine ? gib it me. You no hear'ee Commander-chief call for it ? "

" Chaw ! I no care ; massa call me. "

" De debbil, Tom ! what for you go 'pill dat suisel on me for ? "

" He—he ! 'tan 'way den. "

" Chaw ! dat d—m big Eboe debbil take da punch, just when massa caa' for it, Scipio ! Tom no hear'ee Colonel De'brough call for claret ? I really shamed of you ! You no sense of shame — why you not attend massa commandment ? "

" You no buckra — why you talk grand to me for ? "

While matters were at their highest, a tall portly dame, of the mulatto tribe, with an expression of high good-humour in her face, peeped respectfully into the room, and was immediately recognised by Colonel H.

" Ah, Betsy, my old lady, happy to see you. Capital dinner, Betsy. "

" I glad to my heart to hear'ee you say so. Turtle good, massa ? "

" Excellent — couldn't be better. "

" Tankee, massa : I wis' you all happy, my massas. "

" Here, Betsy — glass of madeira ? "

" Tankee, massa. Very good health ! "

The old lady retired, satisfied at finding her labours had been duly appreciated.

At length the heavy work of the day was got over, the cloth removed, wine and fruits in abundance were placed

on the table, and each man shifted himself, with a joyous chuckle, in his seat, as preparatory to a prolonged and hearty booze.

C. felt that he had already partaken very liberally of the various fluids that had circulated during the dinner, and now looked with no small anxiety at the arrangement of the table for further indulgence. The length of the table had at first deluded him with the hope that the wine would be slow in its progress, but a second glance destroyed this hope. Provision had been made to pass the bottles by short stages from one steward to another ; and the countenance of each of these officials bespoke a steady unflinching sense of duty.

It was now that the convivial qualities of the excellent chairman unfolded themselves. The dignity of his important office had tempered the flash of his moist and merry eye, and kept in abeyance those lines of humour that usually quivered round his mouth, as long as the turtle and mutton were subject matters of discussion ; but his official mask dropped off with the removal of the cloth, and the health of his Majesty was delivered with due emphasis and discretion.

The health of the Queen and Royal Family followed ; and both toasts having been greeted with right loyal shouts of approbation, the chairman rose to propose the health of his Honour the Commander-in-chief ! The toast was prefaced by a sparkling eulogium on his many excellent qualities, and a congratulatory appeal to the company on the pride and satisfaction with which they were enabled to recognise in him a native of their favoured island. The reply in due course succeeded, acknowledging the high honour and happiness in the accustomed style of sentimental twaddle. The generous bumpers, and the ecstatic "high hurrahs," that hailed these speeches, seemed by far the most essential part of the business.

The health of other dignitaries followed, the chairman throwing off several spirited biographical sketches of public characters.

"Mr. Vice," said the chairman, on one of these occasions, "a bumper, if you please ! Gentlemen all, I must

insist on a genuine bumper ! Captain Peters, be good enough to see the glasses filled at your end of the table. Reverend, I can allow of no heel-taps on this occasion ! I am quite sure the chief judge would not allow daylight in his glass if he knew my toast ; and I am satisfied every body present will heartily approve of the toast I am about to propose.

“ Gentlemen,” continued the Colonel, rising from his seat, “ I have to propose the health of a distinguished guest, who, though recently come among us, has already secured our esteem and warmest good-will — a gentleman of that high and honourable profession, to which we look for the protection of our liberties, our laws, and our domestic hearths. Gentlemen, I feel how inadequate I am to the task of fully describing the claims this gallant officer has on our regard ” — (with a look of fierce admiration at the Major,) — “ who having, with his distinguished regiment, met the enemy in a hundred tented fields,” (loud applause, during which the Major modestly declined eighty per cent. of these achievements to his neighbour,) “ amid the snows of America, the burning plains of India, and wherever the banner of the enemy was unfurled.” — (“ Dear me,” said the bewildered Major, “ he must be thinking of the Forty-second.”) — “ I say, gentlemen, having perilled himself and his gallant regiment in these adventures, he is now come among us with his brave comrades, to assist in the protection of our native island, and, I hope, long to continue among us. Gentlemen, I will only add the health of Major Weatherspoon, and the gallant regiment of —— !! ”

Shouts, shrieks, and yells of applause rose like the din of battle to welcome this toast, and appeared to startle even the redoubted veteran in whose honour they had burst forth. When the uproar had lulled, and a few faint “ hip, hips ” only were bubbling in the throat, and a few ultras were prolonging the chimes of their glasses, the Major rose to reply. *Conticuere omnes* ; every eye was fixed on him : but the trusty old soldier had already recovered from the flutter of the moment, and, having a just

notion of his own oratory, had no mind to indulge his auditors with any flights of fancy.

"Gentlemen," he said, "unaccustomed as I am to be called on to acknowledge so handsome a public compliment"—(many a county dinner and corporate feast would have testified against this,)—"all that I can say, gentlemen, is, I shall never forget it—never, gentlemen—never"—(a slight halt, and quiver of the voice here)—"I say again, gentlemen, never. I wish you all a very good health, and I hope, gentlemen, you may always be as happy as I am at this present moment; I am sure I speak the feelings of the whole regiment."

However modestly the Major might have reflected on his parts of speech, his oration met with unbounded applause.—"Capital speech that."—"Just what it ought to be."—"No humbug there."—"D—e, I like that old Major."—"Spoke from the heart."—"A right good fellow."—"Thorough soldier, I'll be bound," &c.

The fruits of the stewards' faithful administration of their functions, under the equally praiseworthy vigilance of the President and his Vice, were beginning to exhibit themselves. The confusion of tongues was rapidly augmenting; flowers of speech were profusely springing up, from hitherto barren soils, now well irrigated with excellent old madeira; and joke, song, repartee, argument, and noise, were contributing to the perfection of this Babel. "Sir," said the Reverend Magnus Bultree, a venerable relic of the ancient episcopal establishment of the West, and attorney for sundry estates, addressing his opposite neighbour, "these are fearful times: a perilous spirit of innovation is stalking abroad. Our parent country, sir, is afflicted with the democratic, demoralising, atheistical doctrines of their neighbours: the pestilence is spreading to these once tranquil shores; social order is trembling to its very base, and men scoff at the wise institutions of our ancestors, and seek to break down the barriers that have been sanctioned by ages for the well-being of communities."

"Or what say you, Reverend," replied his neighbour, Dr. Bowes, a tall thin man, the expression of whose coun-

tenance was quiet and unpretending, unless when a pair of small grey piercing eyes were lighted up by excitement — “to this perilous spirit merely seeking to remove the barriers, that all may run who have the power?”

The doctor was shrewdly suspected of certain heresies, quite at variance with the existing order of things in the colonies. His reply provoked attention from those in his neighbourhood.

“What, sir! would you level the distinctions of society?”

“On the contrary, Reverend, I would exalt them, by making the attainment of them more a matter of merit than accident.”

“The delusive dream, sir, of all those who have only superficially studied the history of mankind,—unworthy the sound sense and penetration of Dr. Bowes.”

“I must risk my character for sense and penetration,” said the doctor, rejecting the divine’s tempting bait; “and while I deprecate the anarchy you apprehend, I shall still indulge hopes that the mass of mankind will gradually rise in social and political estimation, and ——”

“Become masters in their turn!” said Colonel Mago-ree, a colonial A.D.C., and proprietor of some four or five hundred slaves.

“I think,” said another planter, with a look of confiding triumph at the divine, “the Reverend can give you law as well as gospel against that.”

“Ha! doctor, that will be a black dose, after your own fashion.— Beg pardon, Reverend.”

“It won’t do,” said a heavy-looking man, who had recently cast the slough of merchandise, and was now, by virtue of his dominion over a plantation, well stocked with cattle and slaves, one of the aristocrats of the land; — “it won’t do, doctor,— must have order, distinction, and so forth; no keeping up discipline without it; must have authority properly supported.”

“Most people think so, after they have once obtained it,” replied the imperturbable doctor.

“He hit the old shingle-merchant there,” observed one of the *ancien régime* to his neighbour.



But the *cl-devant* vender of lumber and flour did not, or would not, appropriate to himself the allusion to his *fungus* origin.

"I say, doctor, now you will swear, I suppose, that one of these days my slaves will become masters in their turn?"

"Then he'll swear black's white!"

"But what the devil's going on at the top of the table?"

Shouts of laughter from the neighbourhood of the President's chair acted as a decision in favour of the doctor, and attracted the attention of the table. The gallant Major's immediate neighbour was a venerable gentleman, of sober visage, and manners eminently courteous. His white hair was placidly smoothed over his head, and gathered up behind into a short and unpretending tail. He wore a full suit of black, of ancient fashion; and his whole appearance and manners bespoke the gentleman of "the old school;" while the gravity of his countenance well befitted the important functions he fulfilled. The veteran chiefs had been gradually cultivating each other's acquaintance throughout the evening. They had both steadily prosed over their wine, interchanging much profitable discourse both on civil and military affairs. The coincidence of their opinions on many important matters, and their mutually regular observation of the bottle as it passed, was gradually opening the fountain of their hearts, and at length their affections gushed forth. In the delirium of their tenderness, they had risen from their seats, and with an arm of each thrown round the neck of the other, were swearing eternal friendship under the solemn pledge of a bumper.

"For ever—Judge—for ever!"—"Cha—os—shall come again, when I forget thee, major!"

"Bravo—bravo!" shouted the President, amid the merriment of the scene. "Gentlemen, a bumper,—Weatherspoon and Barnet for ever! Pylades and Orestes!"

"Weatherspoon and Barnet for ever!" echoed Peters, from the lower regions. "The ladies, and the rest of us!"—"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

After this achievement, the party commenced separating.

Some few stalked sedately out of the house, evidently well accustomed to carry their burthens ; others staggered along the wall in a very suspicious plight ; some appeared meditating a bivouac under the table ; while C., with the assistance of his friend Peters, found himself at the house of the latter, totally unable to explain the route he had adopted.

A few, however, had remained behind, who, collecting near the head of the table, held it matter of conscience to testify their fealty to the President, until he chose to abdicate. Divers devilled matters were produced to stimulate the faithful few in despatching the skeleton of what had been a well-appointed regiment of bottles of madeira and claret, at the commencement of the feast, and which had been arranged in very imposing files on one side of the room.

The riot and revelry of the party soon attained its climax : in the transports of their loyalty, they exalted the jovial President to a seat on the table — sang “ God save the King ” in full chorus, with an extempore verse in honour of King H., by the Colonial Laureate ; and having joined hands, and executed sundry capers round the table, in compliment to the throne, concluded their homage, and the joys of the evening, by passing round those huge crystal goblets, well replenished with sangrorum, that had ushered in the feast.

As the loyal band were staggering out of the house, an empty mule cart was passing, and a halt immediately ordered. As many as could crowd into the vehicle took possession of it ; and the President, in full uniform, with his cocked-hat and flash feather, occupied the seat in front, flourishing a huge cart-whip, to the annoyance equally of bipeds and quadrupeds. Having ascertained the tranquillity of the town, by indulging his party with a drive through its suburbs, he managed, with the assistance of the driver, to cart his goods in safety to their respective homes, and availed himself of Mulatto Bob's kind offices in reaching his own domicile.

This is a specimen of life in the colonies ; for, notwithstanding yellow fever, mosquitoes, centipedes, scorpions,

tarantulas, fleas, flies, bugs, and gnats, pleasure is not altogether out of reach ; that is, if pleasures consist in convivial society, and sometimes drowning the cares of this world in the oblivion of the bowl. Lord Byron says, and truly perhaps, —

“ Man being reasonable, must get drunk.  
The best part of life is but intoxication ;  
Glory — the grape — love — war — in these are sunk  
The wealth of all men, and of every nation.”

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

THE constant insurrectionary movements which had agitated Columbia from Marguerita to Peru, induced Bolivar to repair, as circumstances required, to place after place, in order to crush the hydra-headed rebellion, and to restore that peace and confidence, which had been lost by the intemperance and ambition of his servants. Paez had declared Venezuela independent of the kingdom of Bogota ; he had meditated being the sovereign of this large tract of country. The Llaneros, or people of the plains of Apuré, where he was himself born, had declared themselves friendly to his views ; and this rough bold soldier found support in his numerous followers, who had ever considered the sway of Bolivar as a tyranny, and had always sighed for an independent government under their idol Paez. Such was the state of Columbia when I anchored in the roads of La Guayra. Paez had consented to wave all pretensions to sovereignty for the present, and Bolivar had hastened from Bogota to effect a reconciliation, and to confirm his friendship with his old ally. The place destined, or rather predetermined, for the meeting was at a small inn, situated on the top of the mountain, over which the road passes from Puerto Cabello to Caraccas. Bolivar arrived in the vicinity of the inn at the appointed time, attended only by Colonel Wilson (the son of Sir Robert Wilson) now Consul-general in Peru, and one or

two domestics. On arriving at the inn, they found that Paez was not true to his engagement ; no tidings had reached the owner of the venta of the Venezuelan chief's approach. It was an hour of intense anxiety to all but Bolivar ; he was the only one who could have been much injured by the perfidy of Paez, who had so often broken his faith, had so frequently involved his country in civil discord, that no reliance could be placed in his word. The Libertador, however, knew that to retreat was worse than to advance, for had any treachery been intended, he was evidently so far in the mesh, that escape would have been impossible ; he therefore bore his usual serenity on his countenance, and mounting his mule, began to descend into the valley. Far as the eye could reach, no trace was visible of Paez ; but, on turning a sudden angle, the surprise was great at beholding a plain covered with tents, and bearing the appearance of a hostile force encamped. As Bolivar neared his *friend*, he perceived the soldiers forming in two files, and flanking the road along which he was obliged to pass : here it was that his faithful aide-de-camp ventured to hint that some perfidy might be intended, and mentioned the propriety of a careful advance, or what perhaps he wished more — a precipitate retreat. It elicited no answer : the President was already in the plains, and as he advanced along the road, the line of soldiers as he passed closed in his rear, so that he was perfectly hemmed in. On this being mentioned to Bolivar, he had the presence of mind not even to turn round to watch the manœuvre, but steadily to pursue his course. Not far distant was Paez, standing by some of his principal officers, dressed in dazzling uniform, surrounded by his soldiers. Bolivar knew him immediately, and directing his mule to the place, quietly dismounted, and, folding the treacherous chief in his arms, said aloud — “ By this behaviour, and this submission to the government, you have saved your country.” The army immediately shouted “ Viva Bolivar ! ” the mountains re-echoed the cheer, and Paez, apparently overcome by his feelings, reclined on the breast of the President. It was immediately agreed, that both should together make a kind of triumphal entry into

Caraccas and La Guayra ; and the putting into effect this resolution gave rise to the following scenes.

So little, however, has been known of the true character of the heroes above-mentioned, that I propose here to give one or two anecdotes descriptive of both ; although the distinguished bravery of Bolivar, and his cool disregard of danger, could not be more highly developed than in the preceding behaviour.

Paez was about five feet eight inches in height, dark, athletic, and well-formed ; he had a full round countenance, with large black penetrating eyes ; but he bore no outward sign of either the talent or the cunning he possessed. That he was a brave man, could not be doubted ; that he was honest, was not quite so well ascertained : he is a man of strong vindictive feelings, hasty in his temper, and rash in his enterprises. When his great personal enemy, Mendoza, died, Paez could not help showing his vindictive meanness, by insulting the dead, and rejoicing that Death had gained the triumph which he had long anticipated in imagination as the work of his own hand. At the dead of night, Paez, accompanied by some of his fierce and lawless companions, retired to the grave of his enemy ; and there, seated round the coffin, which they converted into a table, they joyfully caroused as they drank their miserable guarapo, and played at their favourite *monté*. The merriment became more furious, as they dashed their glasses over the head of the inanimate form ; and their spiteful eyes glistened in horrid exultation, as they called upon the dead to rise from his grave, and drink a long good night to the power of the President. It is reported that the Venezuelan chief poured a libation on the coffin, as he drained the glass to the eternal damnation of his former foe.

To such a being as Paez, honour is but a name ; it exists merely in imagination, and he has been kept honest through the fear of detection ; but a drunkard and gambler can never very long wear the irksome mask ; and nature speaks when the prudent hand of sobriety has been withdrawn. In 1827, certain sums of money were forwarded from Bogota to pay the troops in the district of Caraccas.

Paez took the money under his protection, and forthwith began to gamble with it in large stakes. Fortune, not always faithful to her sons, was unfortunately false on this occasion ; and the chief soon lost the gold, previously destined for his soldiers. The next morning he sent a strong guard to desire the winners to refund, as the money was not his to lose, but belonged to the government ; and in this manner added a theft to his dishonourable conduct. I believe it was this same Paez who staked a large sum for the Virgin Mary, and insisted upon winning in so righteous a cause ; although he lost, he took care to be paid.

When the dividends, to the great and welcome astonishment of the bondholders, were, for a wonder, likely to be forthcoming, partly in gold, and partly in tobacco, the wily Paez allowed both to be actually shipped ; nay, one of the vessels was positively under weigh, when he seized ship and cargo, sold the produce to pay his troops, and himself pocketed the doubloons, and left the bondholders to relapse into their former fears, which certainly have never been dissipated, and never will be obliterated.

I believe the stories of this man's having frequently dived into the rivers to attack the alligators to be mere fiction ; it must be more than a man who will face those horrid monsters ; and all the dexterity of throwing the lasso would be of little avail against these voracious creatures.

Paez was a man of no education ; he had been born and bred in the plains of Apuré, where managing a horse, and throwing a lasso, constitute the principles of education. On the above plains, after a violent shower, the whole extent appears a lake ; and it is reported, that when this great general first saw the sea, as he wound down the road from Caraccas to La Guayra, he exclaimed, “ *Hombre, que aguacero ha habido aqua !* ” (What a shower of rain they have had here !) When he first tasted champagne, at a dinner given by Udeneta, the Captain-general of Maracaibo, the uneducated Paez called out, “ *Hombre, que guarapo tan fuerte !* ” Guarapo is a miserable extract of the sugar-cane.

The word *hombre* is applied at the beginning of almost every exclamation. I remember at Maracaibo, when the

consul's large Newfoundland dog knocked down an independent Columbian, the youngster, as he rose and caught sight of the tremendous animal, vociferated, "*Hombre, que perro tan grande!*" which might be interpreted — "My eye, what a big dog!" Paez placed an officer under arrest for officially announcing the arrival of a seventy-four gun-ship, as he declared the existence of such a thing perfectly impossible.

Of Bolivar, thousands of hair-breadth escapes are recounted. Long before his fame had reached its highest point, and during his stay in Jamaica, he one day dined at the house of Dr. Chamberlaine; after dinner, a heavy rain began to fall, and, by the advice of his host, Bolivar slept where he dined. In the mean time his secretary, who had some papers of consequence ready for signature, was impatiently awaiting the arrival of his master, and, after walking about the verandah in unquiet haste, he threw himself into the Spanish hammock which was suspended, and served for the siesta couch of Bolivar. The fumes of the cigar (for a Spaniard smokes during every operation of nature) soon flavoured his sleep, and, in a few minutes, he was wrapped in forgetfulness. Scarcely, however, had he closed his eyes, when a black slave entered the verandah, and, seeing the supposed Bolivar asleep, drew close to the hammock, and struck the sleeping secretary to the heart: undismayed at the consequences, the murderer ran into the streets, and exulted in his good fortune in having killed Bolivar. Some old Spaniards were the instigators of the crime; but they escaped, and their victim was hanged.

We found the town of La Guayra in great excitement, in consequence of the news of the arrival of Bolivar and Paez at Caraccas, and of their intention to make a public entry into the town. On the 30th of January, 1827, the show took place. The town had been previously decorated with triumphal arches; the streets were adorned with flowers, boughs of trees, and plantain-leaves; on almost every wall was painted "*Viva Bolivar!*" The excitement of revolution and rebellion gave way to that occasioned by a general reconciliation; party spirit seemed terminated; and, saving that now and then, in the narrow and obscure

parts of the town, a death's head surmounted with "Viva Paez" was discernible, the traveller might have believed that a general union of sentiments, as well as a general union of merriment, prevailed. The boys and girls, in their holiday dresses, adorned with flowers, waved little Columbian ensigns; every house displayed the flag of the country; whilst, here and there, a large standard hung from the window, and almost reached the street, as it fluttered in the breeze. Poetry is as common in Columbia as in a young lady's album; almost every wall could boast of some attraction of this kind; and whilst some of the verses savoured much of a secret lurking of rebellion, yet many wore the appearance of honest love and affection for the President: of the latter kind the following is a specimen:—

De Bolivar la fama  
Resuona in todo el orbe,  
Por sus hazañas y valor,  
Por sus constancia y gratitud —  
Y los Venezolanos en su corazon  
Gravada tendran para siempre  
Su dulce e grata memoria.\*

However expressive of gratitude these sentiments may be supposed to be, the people of Venezuela were the first to turn against the object of this panegyric; and after hurling him from his high and proud situation as President of *such a people*, suffered the man who had fought their hundred battles, extirpated their oppressors, and founded an extensive government, to die almost solely of a broken heart, in an insignificant village by the sea-side, surrounded by spies, and occasionally scoffed at by the populace.

The municipality addressed invitations to every resident and every officer to assemble in the custom-house by half-past eight A. M., in order to move in line to receive the President; and those whose violent attachment to the great man overcame their prejudice against dust and dirt, trumpets and drums, shrill voices and cannons, met the Liberator at the foot of the Caraccas mountain; where, dismounting the Don, they placed him in an old gig, but so covered with flowers, crowns, and trophies that the shabby

\* Fame resounds the name of Bolivar throughout the world, for his constancy, his gratitude, his exploits, and his valour; and the people of Venezuela will for ever retain his memory engraven on their hearts.



conveyance was wisely doomed to shun the public sight. Two of the free — two who had shaken off the yoke of despotism — consented to be yoked to the chariot of their ruler ; and, thus escorted, the whole party advanced along the bay to the town of La Guayra. As they passed abreast of the ship, she fired a salute of nineteen guns ; which, though unshotted, produced a disagreeable effect. An old woman, mounted on a mule, and carrying a burthen of eggs in a pannier, was passing when our first gun was fired. Whether the motion of her hand, as she raised it to make the sign of the cross, or the noise, startled her restive animal, did not transpire ; but the creature shied across the road, upset the good dame, ran the pannier against the wheels of the triumphal car ; and then putting his head down between his fore-legs, he elevated his hinder parts, and lashed out at every passer-by. The line was soon broken ; and one of the yoked citizens, fearful of a kick, swerved against his fellow-labourer, and very nearly overturned the President. It was emblematic of what afterwards occurred ; and any prophet might have risen high in popular favour, had he drawn aside the mantle of futurity, and proclaimed that the time was at hand when the stubborn and refractory people would, by opposing all soothing measures, upset the whole state, and hurl the ruler into the slough of misfortune. No one enacted prophet, and the omen was disregarded.

Although I very willingly contributed my trifling power to add to the respectability of the show, I confess I never saw any better representation of Guy Fawkes, in any country village in England, on the 5th of November. In the car of triumph sat also General Paez : a gang of dingy generals and colonels followed immediately in the rear ; and then came the foreign merchants, and the tag-rag, whose loud *vivas* were only silenced by the volumes of dust obstructing the voice, or the confounded burst of the Chinese crackers — a species of detonating balls, which are always used upon every occasion in which it is necessary to make *noise* the substitute for joy. In advance rode a kind of harlequin-dressed man, who blew a trumpet, and then read aloud the pardon to all those in any way con-

cerned in the rise of Venezuela. This mode of restoring tranquillity by reconciliation and forgiveness, is in many instances erroneous: when the revolvers are men of high character, you may turn a formidable foe into a firm friend; but when the disturbing spirit has only operated upon the lowest classes, whose minds are swayed and changed, like the branches of a tree in a breeze, then pardon sometimes becomes a kind of premium for insurrection, and a fear is implied, or fancied to be implied, that the law is too sanguinary to be carried into effect. Having paraded the objects of their temporary affection through every lane and street of La Guayra, the citizens dislodged the contents of the car at the custom-house. After the fatigue of the triumph, it was proposed that the President should rest from his labours; but no! in spite of the Peruvian guard of honour, every child of the state resolved to see the *Padre de la Patria*: therefore, decorating their coats with the ribbon of patriotism, in which the words "Gloria a Bolivar! Viva la Republica de Colombia!" were inscribed, they broke through the fence of discipline, and ushered themselves into the presence of the Liberator.

In the midst of the noise and tumult created by the intrusion, I advanced to pay my respects to the senior officer at La Guayra, having a sufficient number of officers with me to give a better appearance to my insignificance. I had had numerous complaints from the English merchants and consul, that not unfrequently their horses had been taken to mount the cavalry; that their property was insecure; and, in point of fact, if I felt inclined to make a hostile demonstration, I had plenty of reasonable objections to bring forward. His Excellency received me in his bed-chamber, he himself being stretched out for a moment's repose. On a sofa were Generals Paez and Silva, tickling one another, and romping about like two school girls. That ruffian Bermudez, a man whose countenance was a true index of his mind, was looking from the window towards the ship in the bay, and never even turned to give that salutation, which all Spaniards of the lowest breed would blush to omit. Our conversation was short. I soon remarked that the journey had fatigued the President, and

therefore intended to withdraw ; but when I found the large room crowded with citizens eager for an audience, I sat myself down near a window to witness the scene. In about half an hour he appeared ; and my surprise was great when I remarked that no person rose at his entrance ; every person was seated, with the exception of one or two near the door. I could not divest myself of the common mark of respect shown to a casual stranger in our country, and I found myself the only man standing besides the President : he immediately advanced to me ; and, after some trivial remarks, desired me to be seated.

Bolivar was a thin, haggard, worn-out man in appearance, but very different in reality ; he looked as unlike a great man, or one capable of great exertion, as any I ever saw ; he resembled a French postilion more than a warrior. When he addressed me, he never looked at my face ; but occasionally cast a quick, scrutinizing glance, more indicative of cunning, than open manliness of behaviour.

The municipality had issued invitations (under the protection of about a dozen angels, who were represented on the card as blowing the loud trumpet of fame) for a "*Banquete, en la Sala Principal de la Aduana* ;" and being resolved to make as much show, and to appear as liberal as possible, they extended their request to every man in La Guayra, who could come under the denomination, either by himself or his friends, of a gentleman : the courteous mode of flattery so common with Spaniards was not forgotten on this occasion : the invitation concluded with these words, which certainly, considering to whom in many instances it was addressed, savoured very strongly of flattery : "*Esperan que V los favorezca con su asistencia para mayor lucimiento y suntuosidad* : " the time fixed was five o'clock, and we were true to the request.

The room was decorated with wreaths of flowers, and with the Columbian and English ensigns blended together. The table was well covered with comestibles, and on the signal being given, we advanced to the "*banquete*." Bolivar took the chair ; on his right was seated a rather elderly lady ; on his left were Paez, Silva, Colonel Bolivar, and myself ; Sir Robert Porter sat on the right of the

lady ; the rest of the company took their places according as they found their names. During the time generally devoted to eating, a respectable silence was observed, and only now and then the national customs appeared to break the monotony. A servant came to me with a piece of meat stuck on a fork, and told me it was from the *señorita*. I immediately directed my eyes to the fair object ; and making an inclination of the head, as is done in drinking a health, I swallowed the savoury morsel : it was what she no doubt thought was delicious ; but English and Spanish tastes differ much in regard to garlic and such odoriferous concomitants to meat. This mode of sending meat to one another is a great compliment ; but if the lady *takes* a piece from the plate of the man, it is going as far as prudence and delicacy will allow. After dinner Paez amused himself by rolling up pellets of bread, and flipping them with great dexterity into the faces of his neighbours : it excited a considerable degree of merriment if the general pitched his shot into the mouth, or ear, or nostril, of the unconscious person attacked, who of course started with amazement at finding himself so unexpectedly contributing to the amusement of the company.

Perhaps there is no place where more tact is required in a great man than at a banquet of this kind, surrounded by the representatives of every monarch in Europe. To make any pointed allusion to one, is an implied disrespect to the others. It is positively requisite to say something in pre-facing a toast ; and in this nice tact certainly Bolivar was excessively deficient : he allowed himself to be carried away by the stream of his own eloquence, which flowed so smoothly and fluently, that for the moment he swept his attentive listeners away, charmed by the rapidity and beauty of his language. The speech was handsome in the extreme to the English nation ; but when the President expressed his wish that, from the southern point of Spain to the banks of the Neva, all should be one Great Britain, under one great George, the French and Dutch consuls were by no means gratified, and gave very evident marks of their displeasure. There was still time to have rectified the mistake, or at any rate to have soothed the parties ;

but by some unaccountable oversight, no reference was, throughout the different speeches, made to either one country or the other, and the party broke up without having drained one drop to either the king of the Netherlands or the sovereign of France. The insult, evidently not intended, was quickly forgotten by the lazy Dutchman, whilst the French representative soon danced off his spleen ; but the Americans — the fathers of republics, the emblem of the free, the first nation which recognised these Columbians — they bitterly felt the neglect, and, like free men, were not slow to show it. The American consul had, a week previous to the banquet, concocted a most luminous and lengthy response to what he considered a certainty — namely, the health of John Quincy Adams : but when he found that no allusion was even made to his country, he looked as pale as Mrs. Elizabeth Woodcock, who was found buried in the snow near Cambridge, in 1799 ; and directly the President rose, the whole of the free-born walked out in great dudgeon, and left us to lament their loss in the ball-room. A band played the overture to Tancredi as we entered the saloon, at the conclusion of which some singers sang a complimentary song to the President, about as long as Chevy Chase ; at the end of which Paez seized a fiddle from one of the musicians, and playing an air, sang an extemporary verse in honour of England. The party separated about eleven o'clock, at which time I walked round the town to see the illuminations. They were splendid ; and, owing to the branches of trees, and flowers, arcades, &c., it resembled Vauxhall.

On the 31st of January a grand ball was given to the President ; but the neglect previously mentioned occasioned a great drawback to the conviviality of the evening. The Americans met in the morning, intending to pay their respects, and remonstrate on the omission and apparent neglect manifested towards them ; but, like the President, they allowed themselves to be carried away by the heat of argument, and ultimately decided that they would neither visit Bolivar, nor add their *lucimiento y suntuosidad* to the ball-room. The French and Dutch consuls and people behaved more like Christians ; they forgave an unintention-

tional insult, and joined the merry dance. This occurrence, trifling as it may appear, raised a very serious clamour against Bolivar, and made him several very powerful enemies.

On the 1st of February I mounted a mule and proceeded to Caraccas. I am a wandering sailor, and never felt the luxury of repose, excepting in bed: to see strange places was always my uppermost wish, and to the gratification of this desire may be attributed my visits to almost every place of note in either Europe or America. The early part of the day would have better suited for the mountain excursion in regard to comfort; but then, generally speaking, a mist settles in the valleys, and the hills are covered with clouds: by noon this has all disappeared, and the view is uninterrupted. The mule and his master very seldom agree; and not unfrequently the former so entirely disapproves of the proceedings of the latter, that instead of going to Caraccas, he turns short round, dislodges his rider, and trots back again home.

The road, which is paved in most parts, winds up a very steep and by no means easy ascent, for in one part it is six thousand feet above the level of the sea. The view of the valleys, the sides of which are coffee plantations—the upland scenery—the prodigious extent of country—the sudden precipices—the sparkling rivulet—the broad clear ocean—the ships—the busy town—when combined in almost one glance, is a sight not often seen, equal to that which meets the eye of the traveller as he winds his weary way to the Venta. From this inn the view is beautifully romantic; it stands on the slope of a mountain, peeping over a precipice of about two thousand feet. In crossing the Silla of Caraccas no pen can do justice to the scenery; it is a magnificent sight, and heightened by the constant variation: whilst gazing at the rugged mountain—or lost in admiration at the sublimity of the scene, the mule turns a sharp angle of the road, and the valley of Caraccas, as if produced by a stroke of the enchanter's wand, shows its peaceful level and its rushing river. From this sudden and unexpected turn the traveller sees beneath him, some three thousand feet, the city of Caraccas, the cultivated

valley, and the rapid Guayra ; and here, in a cooler atmosphere than is generally felt by the West Indian, and relieved for a moment from the buzzing mosquitoes or biting sandfly, from oppressive heat and sleepy lassitude, may gaze on one of Nature's most delightful scenes, and ruminate over one of her fairest works.

On nearing Caraccas, but at a respectable height, stands the ruin of an old church. In the past age of foolish bigotry this church was used as the limit of the march of penitence, it being frequently pronounced requisite previous to obtaining absolution for numerous peccadilloes, to walk barefooted from Caraccas to hear mass in "*L'Iglesia de Penitencia*." This could have been no party of pleasure for such offenders ; for the levelling spirit of M'Adam has never crossed the Silla of Caraccas, nor have the sharp rocks been crushed into powder by the heavy wheel of Pickford's van : still, however, the road is reckoned the best in Columbia ; but it must be infinitely worse than that which led the pilgrim to Loretto.

I arrived at about five o'clock ; the setting sun cast the lengthened shadows of the houses over the ruins of the numerous buildings which had been shaken into their present state by the great earthquake in 1812 ; and directing my mule to the house of Sir Robert Ker Porter, I took up my portmanteau and my quarters in his hospitable and comfortable abode.

The name of this city is so connected with our remembrance of the earthquake, when 16,000 people lost their lives, that the stranger immediately inquires if there still exists any record of the catastrophe. The principal part of the people who were swallowed up by the rending of the earth, or buried beneath the ruins occasioned by the shock, were at prayers when the fearful destruction occurred. Every church, protected either by St. Francis or St. Nicholas, fell to the ground : the belfry of the cathedral alone withstood the concussion ; but, as if sensible of the calamity, and alarmed at the work of desolation which threatened the general extinction of the inhabitants, and aware that some record should remain to inform the historian of the hour and minute when the shock occurred,

the clock stopped at seven minutes past four, at the very instant when the first rumbling noise was heard, and still remains with its hands pointed to the hour, as a fearful memorial of the past, and an awful warning of the future. The superstitious reverence paid to this clock grants it an eternal repose; and this and the ruins of the former palace are the only sights that strangers are shown as worthy of observation.

The cathedral, which has been rebuilt, and which has little to offer in its interior to attract the curious, is not without some strange exterior beauties, calculated to awaken the pious and Christian feelings of both husbands and wives, and of brothers and of sisters. In the walls of this stately edifice are divers niches, in which affectionate mothers leave their living or dead children, to await alike—a sepulchre. The baskets, which contain in many instances the former, but mostly the latter freight, are not covered, and are placed in these niches: they contain not only the body, but a requisite fee to the church. If the unnatural mother forgets this last important point, the child is left until the heat of the sun, or the more putrefying rays of the moon give ample notice that it is unburied, whilst the gathering of the crows offers the only chance of removing the pestilence. This capital contrivance to dispose of the consequences of illicit love, or to shield a murderer, continues to this day; and has, in some respects, a decided advantage over the “*enfants trouvés*” at Moscow; for although in the latter place no questions are asked, excepting if the child is baptized, or by what name it is to be called, yet they will not receive *dead* children; whereas at Caraccas, it is by no means uncommon to leave them in either state, dead or alive, to the service or compassion of the church.

In a work entitled “*Calabria during a Military Residence*,” there is a very excellent account of an earthquake, with the preceding indications. “Close, compact, and immovable mists seem to hang heavily over the earth; in some places the atmosphere appeared to be red-hot, so that people expected every moment that it would burst into flames; the water of the rivers assumed an ashy and turbid



colour ; while a suffocating stench of sulphur diffused itself around." These signs do not always precede the earthquake ; for previous to my retiring to bed I had remarked the state of the barometer—had seen the Guayra running in its usual clearness ; the stars were forth ; the moon beautifully clear ; not a cloud was to be seen, except one dark funereal pall, which hung over the summit of the Silla ; the inhabitants had long before deserted the streets, and Caraccas was still, save now and then the dismal moan of the cattle : the howl—the long, low, melancholy howl—of the dog broke the silence of the night. The horses were restless, and moved about in an odd and unnatural manner ; the more domestic animals appeared frightened ; and flights of birds passed in rapid velocity. Still, however, the glass indicated no sudden change ; the night was not unusually close ; and when I went to my room, I little thought of the destruction so near at hand. About three A. M. the rumbling of an earthquake was heard—and felt. It appeared to me exactly what might be experienced by a man unaccustomed to London, who had taken up his night's lodging near the White Horse in Piccadilly, or a stranger on the Rez-de-Chaussée in Paris, when one of their thousand *accélérés* passes through the street : the bed shook in precisely the same manner.

A wild confusion followed the first indication of the earthquake. The inhabitants left their tottering houses and rushed into the streets. Females in almost a perfect state of nudity ran with dishevelled hair, screaming through the town ; the aged and infirm sat crying, and wringing their hands in anguish and despair ; the church bell tolled in a sad, monotonous, and dismal tone ; a black cloud hung over the devoted city ; while the rattling of the houses, the crash of the walls, the shrieks of the children, and the thunder of the elements, gave an awful foreboding of the mischief and misery likely to follow. The inhabitants who had outlived the former earthquake considered this as likely to finish their existence. In the Calle St. Juan a house fell in with a most tremendous crash at the very time when an interval of calm and silence occurred. In the Candalario another crash occurred ; and daylight

had dawned before the poor frightened females forsook the churches, into which they had crowded, and were seen in a truly laughable condition, picking their steps over the sudden ruin.

The bravest men in action are not proof against these sudden visitations of Providence. Bolivar rushed in his shirt into the streets of La Guayra, for the earthquake was severely felt there; and Paez, as if aware of his former misdeeds, and the probability of a speedy death, was discovered on his knees. So unusual a position excited the wonder of his adherents; and the circumstance was for some time discredited. Some people never profit by example. The churches were the very places which ought to have been avoided; but this time the interposition of the saints was declared to have saved the ruin, and St. Francis and St. Nicholas gained thousands of votaries.

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### CHAPTER XXX.

THE morning broke through the thick cloud which had veiled the city, and displayed the heart-breaking consequences of the night: some who had but the day before been in affluence, were now ruined; and many a haughty man was left to fight his way through poverty, and bear up against his own and the world's caprice. The dead were numbered and buried—the widow left her tears and her prayers—the orphan in vain solicited the aid of a parent, and the father wept for his lone and miserable existence; almost every house was rent—the ruin was immense—the town shaken to its very foundation—every thing suffered, but the churches and the priests.

The churches were crowded the morning after the earthquake: innumerable presents were offered at the shrine of the favoured saints; the niches were crammed with children, and a general fast was ordained, but by no means observed. It is curious enough to compare different nations,

under any infiction. Individually speaking, the Frenchman “tears a passion to rags;” and on one occasion, at Frascati’s, I saw an apparently cool gambler, who had sat day after day, and night after night, in calculating the chances, at last resolve to risk his all, which was considerable, he being quite sure of a profitable result. Fortune, they say, favours the brave; the blind goddess mistook the bravery of her follower, and the black won instead of the red. The sudden change of countenance was beyond description; a load of “sacres” followed the announcement of the loss, and preceded a multiplicity of curses. The destitute man, after seeing his notes raked with unfeeling coolness by the banker, and placed upon a heap of others, rose from his seat, and running to the fire-place, endeavoured to fracture his skull by beating it against the mantel-piece; but Nature had so strongly protected the part, that all his endeavours were unavailing. He was soon pushed out of the room, and his money handed to more successful players. Not so Spaniards: they are indifference personified. Often have I watched an *arriero*, who had scraped together some few dollars, take his place by a *monté* table. A cup of chocolate with some dry toast, and a glass of clear water, stood before him: the never-failing cigar between his fingers occasionally placed to his lips, after which followed the long ejecting of smoke, either whiffed out in a continued stream, or puffed out in imitation of the smoke of cannon during a salute. His stake is lost—his all perhaps in the world. Not a word, or a sigh, or a complaint escapes from his lips. Perhaps the cigar might be more fervently compressed, but his countenance will be unchanged: he will finish his chocolate, drink a little of the water, watch the play for a minute—we love to linger near the place even where Fortune has frowned upon us, “for where the treasure is, there will the heart be also”—and then walk as unconcernedly away as if he had won. This general apathy was exhibited after the earthquake—mass was said—prayers were offered up, devoutly and sincerely, and then the cold eye of indifference would be cast upon the ruins, or the livelier glance of curiosity peeped into a house the walls of which

were rent from top to bottom : but I heard no lamentations or bewailing ; the business of the city seemed conducted with its usual liveliness, and a stranger could scarcely believe, that only a few hours previously the whole town was in danger of being swallowed up : if they wept, they wept in solitude.

The reception of Bolivar in Caraccas had been attended with the usual feasting and dancing. The houses were decorated as at La Guayra, and almost every wall could show the words—"Viva Simon Bolivar, el hijo mimado de la gloria." The cheers of the populace were deafening ; and the bubble of popular applause, which even then was preparing to burst, floated gaily over the city :—such is life—the "hijo mimado de la gloria" soon found that all the apparent sincerity of the Venezuelans vanished ; his co-partner in glory and triumph proved his worst enemy ; and the different countries which formed that vast government became separate states, under different rulers : the "favoured child of fortune" was turned from his high estate ; and after experiencing all the painful feelings of ingratitude, and after lingering into a state of broken-heartedness, he expired at Santa Martha, at the very moment when his friends had rallied, and he was expected to have been recalled to the seat of government. Few men have shown the disinterested patriotism which Bolivar did : he sacrificed every social enjoyment for the public good—he dissipated his fortune to forward the great cause of Independence—he formed the government of Bogota upon liberal and just principles—he refused the crown, which had been offered to him frequently ; and had he ruled Americans instead of mongrel Spaniards, he would have left behind him a nation as ready to do justice to his great and splendid talents, his bravery, generosity, and patriotism, as they had proved themselves in regard to Washington, to whom Bolivar was not one jot inferior.

We have yet to see the end of Paez he is captain-general of Venezuela ; and will, if one be permitted to use the prophet's mantle, be a sacrifice to some other upstart for popular applause.

It is a lamentable lesson on human weakness and ingra-

titude; and the republican governments of Mexico and Columbia show the danger of hasty innovations and constitutional changes.

Change we the scene. I soon after returned to La Guayra; and getting under weigh, stood out to sea. A few days afterwards saw me at anchor in the open bay of Jacquemel, in St. Domingo.

On a rising ground overlooking the roadstead, and which constitutes the great square of this little town, a review of the troops was to take place the morning after my arrival; and as the soldiers and officers of the kingdom of Hayti are of all hues and shades, from the Mustee (for whites are excluded) down to the dingiest black, I imagined there could be no better mode of laughing away care than by assisting (as the French say), at the ceremony. I was on the ground to see the troops form, which they did in the most independent manner, without any word of command, in a square; after which they all sat down upon the ground, some commenced eating, some smoked, and some went to sleep. The uniforms, if they can be dignified by such an appellation, were as variable as the shades of the men, and shoes and stockings were not in great request: some negro girls ran about, from company to company, with ginger beer, whilst the officers formed in a small group, with their drawn swords under their arms, and ventured to converse on the state of affairs in a loud and arrogant manner.

I had waited until my patience and the land-wind were nearly expended, and had mentioned my intention of retiring before the sun was too oppressive to render even a review in Hayti desirable, when a flourish of trumpets rang through the air, the front ranks of the troops were on foot directly, but the rear line remained in every sense of the word "at ease." I flattered myself that I attracted some attention, as I was in uniform, and a white man; but I flattered myself in vain—the vanity of a black man armed, and the arrogance of an emancipated slave, are proverbial: I was treated with not the slightest respect, and allowed to sit on the grass, surrounded by a host of half-clad inhabitants, who gave ample proof of their presence without intruding themselves on the sight; the body, which might

have been "scented in the lobby," was not one jot more offensive than the gentlemanly society of Jacquemel. Another and another sound of trumpets ushered in Prince Frederick, the commander of the forces, who, with his trumpeters, rode full gallop into the centre, and then suddenly stopped short: he rode through the square with his hat off, at a walking pace, the soldiers presented arms one after another as he passed, after which he gave a very dignified wave of his gold three-corned scraper, and galloped off as fast as he came: he rode a miserable bony hack, and wore Hessian boots topped with gold lace; between the top of the boots and the lower extremity of his short inexpressibles, the polished black skin appeared a continuation of leather: his uniform was exactly that of a captain in the navy, before the caprice of the ruling power had altered the neatest dress in the world, to a something between an English artilleryman and a Spanish trooper, and made the most convenient apparel into the most vexatious harlequinade ever dreamt of for a naval officer. Honest Jack always wore clothes which in hot weather might be loose, and in cold weather warm; but now! (Heavens defend us from a Jamaica station), we are trussed-up and stuffed like turkeys for roasting, and are as deceitful in appearance, as the marines were when the serjeant on a clear day received the following orders for the dress of his men — "Sergeant," said the officer, "let the men be drest in light breeches and leggings, and fine-weather tufts and tails."

After the review, I paid an official and respectful visit to Frederick the Black Prince. He had a guard to receive me, and his servants were garbed as soldiers: he very kindly invited me to breakfast, which I declined, and after many mutual expressions of respect, I withdrew — the Prince, like a courteous Spaniard, seeing me to the door, and returning my last salute.

I had warned the officers on no account to entangle themselves in any dispute with the inhabitants, and to be particularly cautious not to disobey any port-orders: having given this order, I permitted them to go on shore as usual. The town of Jacquemel offers, however, no allurements. The same idle, listless life, which is the characteristic of

Spanish women and Creole girls, is here conspicuous. The ladies, for ladies keep shops, are to be seen sitting in a lounging position before their doors, their sole occupation being the chew-stick, which they from morning to night employ in cleaning their teeth; and saving that, and the necessary expectoration, they positively trifle away life in idleness and sleep. The men are equally without energy. As to cultivation of the ground, or the formation of roads, that would remind them of former days, when slavery in obedience forced them to the unwilling labour. The women are perfection as to figure, and not unfrequently very handsome: they cannot marry a white man, nor does the civil law of Hayti enforce the ceremony even on the inhabitants. Illegitimate children succeed to the property of the father, if there be none others born in wedlock.

Their abhorrence of white men may be easily imagined; they know that we, from some innate pride, or some fantastic dislike to the colour, or some unwarrantable belief that they are the descendants of Cain, and born to be slaves, must despise them; and that no philanthropy — no theory — no arguments can make us fancy their society as desirable, or their intellects equal to our own. These feelings naturally rankle into hatred, and this hatred manifests itself on every occasion.

I had a very jolly, fat-faced midshipman, who did his duty with cheerfulness and alacrity, and made his labour sweeten his rest, and his rest strengthen his labour: he was one of the first to go on shore, and see a black people in a state of comparative civilization.

It is said that "conversation is the vehicle of knowledge;" but as the inhabitants were either too idle or too proud to be loquacious, my wag of a midshipman gained very little knowledge of the domestic manners of the Haytians, and, after wandering about until sun-set without advancing much in his researches, he resolved to make a forcible entry into a house in which he saw a very pretty girl of about seventeen. No sooner had he sat down, than the girl ran out into the street and made an appeal to her friends on the score of assistance, and the midshipman fearing the black thorn, or the Indian *rubber*, made a precipi-

tate retreat to the beach. It was past eight o'clock in the evening, and it was one of the port-regulations, that no boat should be used after that hour ; for, notwithstanding the happiness of independence and starvation, some of these patriots have manifested a great desire to seek their fortunes in other parts, where *masters* feed their *servants*, and where liberty and equality are not assigned as the reason why the poor may want, or the aged and infirm sink unregarded into their graves.

No boat was to be had, for there was none near the pier : a walk along the beach, in the direction of the ship, however, supplied the loss, for he found one hauled up ; and, as she was small, he launched her, and, getting into the frail conveyance, began to use the oars. No sooner was the noise heard, than the guard stationed near the pier came at a quick pace, and began to threaten immediate murder if he did not return ; as he was so very close, that, had they fired, he must have been hit, he, in no very good temper, turned the boat towards the beach, and was shortly on shore. The guard seized him directly ; upon which he ventured to retaliate by knocking one down, and calling the others, in very intelligible French, a set of black scoundrels and cowards. If he had merely called them by the terms instead of adding the adjective of colour, the insult would have been passed unnoticed ; but when they were called *black* cowards, they felt the force of the term ; and, drawing their bayonets, began to try how a *white* man could stand pain, and whether he winced as the cold iron entered his seat of honour. In this manner was he urged to the guard-house ; he was then locked up in a dark hole, which, independently of the solitary confinement, had all the annoyance of bad smells and an entire exclusion from external air.

In this very cheerless situation, he had every prospect of passing the night ; for the guards were amusing themselves in ridiculing the valour and comforts of white men, and adding to the luxury of their vengeance, by hoping the centipedes and scorpions would not be very offensive. The midshipman, who was not to be frightened, verified the saying of Hudibras —



Quoth he — one half of man, his mind,  
Is sui generis — unconfined,  
And cannot be laid by the heels,  
Whate'er the other moiety feels, " —

and began to sing a song in a loud voice, which so annoyed the guard, that they unhoused him and placed him in the streets ; but whenever he began to move, they exhibited the bayonets, and he was ultimately obliged to court sleep in a gutter, where he was disturbed by a tropical shower — a species of waterfall descending in streams as large and as rapid as the fluid ejected from a fire engine : it was in vain he endeavoured to escape ; his merciless enemies watched him narrowly, and when they thought him sufficiently soaked, they locked him up, leaving him to be the food of mosquitoes, which, attracted by the moisture, dug their sharp proboscis into his fat cheeks, and left him in the morning like a mulatto with the small-pox. When one of our boats was seen advancing to the shore, they turned him out, as pretty a specimen of what insignificant enemies, when congregated together, and, acting *in concert*, can effect, as ever was seen in this world. As they liberated him, they expressed their utter abhorrence of white men in general, and unhesitatingly said that, one day, they hoped to retaliate their former sufferings upon more worthy enemies — then, hooting him as he advanced to the boat, they courteously said, " Good b'ye, *white man*."

This ludicrous misadventure in love, reminds me of another, which had, however, a tragical termination. One of our ships arrived at St. Michael's in the Western Islands, and was to remain about two or three days to refit, get water, oranges, and fresh provisions. The captain as usual went on shore (for the duty is always better done in harbour when the chief is out of the way) ; and in visiting the different parts of the town he came to the convent, which is situated not far from a small projecting pier. Here it is by no means uncommon to purchase sweetmeats, or little baskets, the work of religious hands, and all executed for the purpose of charity. There is a small kind of revolving thing, shaped like a plate-warmer, which is turned outwards for your money, and then turned inwards, that it may pass to the vendors at St. Michael's. This revolving

apparatus is large enough to admit a man. I have been turned round in it twice, and was as often very glad to be turned back again, not liking my company. This was not the case with the captain in question: he found two beautiful creatures, with eyes like antelopes, and equally graceful in shape and step; being one of those gentlemen who always considered a convent a very improper place to be allowed to exist, and caring no more about the Lady Abbess than he did for a Capuchin friar, he availed himself instantly of the favourable moment, and seized the hand of the youngest. She shrunk like a sensitive plant — a very proper emblem of the lady; her eyes expressed rather a feeling of pleasure than disgust, which was not lost upon the captain. The companion stood at some distance watching, but by no means indicating, or giving the least alarm. The situation was tempting, and who could resist? The eyes of the fair captive rested in watery wonder on the face of the bold intruder; and as he drew her white hand towards him, and bent his head forward to whisper some sweet expression, the nun made a similar motion, and instead of receiving a kind word, she received a kiss, by no means the cold, dull kiss of religion, but “a kiss of love, and youth, and beauty, all concentrated into one focus.” The colour flew into her devotional face, and her heart beat with a quickened motion, producing a sensation as pleasant as it was novel. In a moment the captain proposed to elope with her; but at that time, and in that dress, it was impossible. Never did ear listen to the silver voice of the seducer with more attention than did the lost nun: her only objection was leaving her friend behind.

The captain instantly repaired on board; a low whispering earnest conversation took place with the first-lieutenant; the officers were desired to remain on board; two men were placed to make a rope-ladder; the other duties of the ship were hurried over, and all the energies of men and officers in high requisition. At ten o'clock the ship weighed, and hove-to in the bay: the captain and first-lieutenant went on shore in the gig, and a little secrecy was observed in regard to the captain's cloak-bag, out of which by some bungling, fell a cocked hat. The circumstance

alone of those two officers being absent together might have occasioned some surprise, but sailors are dull to suspect ; it might have been a duel in which the captain had entangled himself, but men rarely fight in the dark ; and then the cocked-hat — what could that be for ? — a man seldom fights a duel in full uniform, and never with a cocked-hat. In short, the ship being so suddenly under weigh, without previous notice, was quite enough to excite some surprise : but to our story. The gig crept to the shore : not a sound was heard, and the muffled oars propelled the boat in silence until she touched the pier head. The captain, first-lieutenant, and cockswain landed, the latter carrying the cloak-bag, and advancing in the most cautious and guarded manner. The boat was kept with her bow towards the ship, at the very extremity of the pier, and the two foremost oars were kept in the water.

“ Hush ! hush ! ” said the captain ; “ this must be the window ; give me the rope-ladder, and leave the cloaks and hats here.”

“ What signal are we to give, sir ? ” asked the first-lieutenant : “ I fear we are too early.”

“ Now, cockswain, stand at that corner ; directly we move towards the boat, run and take your place. But if,” resumed the captain, “ you see any one approach, whistle, and walk quietly this way.”

The captain then stood back a little, and whistled one sharp note, keeping his eyes intently fixed upon the window : in two minutes it opened, and a fair face was discernible.

“ La cuerda, la cuerda,” whispered the captain, and a small rope was soon in his hand ; to this he fastened the end of the rope-ladder, which the nuns drew up and secured by the hooks to the lower part of the window. The captain ascended, to be certain of its security, and urged the girls, no longer nuns, instantly to descend. It was now their resolution began to waver ; but they had gone too far to retreat : the captain’s urgent manner fortified their minds for the desperate, rash, and irretrievable action ; and a minute had scarcely elapsed before the youngest was in the arms of the captain, enveloped in a large cloak, with a cocked-hat on her head. Again the second wavered in

her resolution ; she cried, and became dreadfully agitated. In vain the captain again ascended, — she was still irresolute, when the loud whistle of the cockswain announced the approach of a stranger. The captain descended in a moment ; the unfortunate girl, now driven to desperation, caught at the last chance of escape, got upon the ladder, and began the descent. Scarcely, however, had she accomplished two steps, when she missed her hold, fell from the ladder, and broke her leg. Her screams were dreadful, and resounded over the bay. She was left by the convent wall, while the other was conveyed on board ; the sails filled, and when the morning appeared, the island, her former home, and peace of mind, were for ever lost. The fate of the one left has never transpired. We know little of the punishments inflicted within the walls of these holy prisons ; but over the fate of the other I draw the veil of inviolable secrecy.

It is quite impossible to give an idea of the wretched poverty of these people ; they are living proofs of what has often been attested, that let a negro be free, and he will starve : they are by nature so prone to laziness, that without something more stimulating than partial hunger, they would allow an Eden to become a low brush-wood, or the most cultivated land to run into weeds and barrenness. The state of St. Domingo is a light-house placed on a rock, — if we *choose* to be wrecked, with the warning before us, why the light will direct us to the reef ; if not, we can take the bearings, and steer another course.

There is a place on the coast of Columbia called the Bay of Maracaibo, which is distant about twenty-four miles from a town of the same name, and which town stands on the borders of a wide lake. This lake has been the place of many a hard fight ; and, insignificant as it is from its local situation, and rendered more so by the bar which protects the anchorage, under an island called Bajo Seco, and which is so shallow that no vessel drawing eleven feet water had ever crossed it previous to my arrival ; yet is the lake celebrated in the Columbian history ; and the division of territory, called the state of Maracaibo, is one of the most

extended, least cultivated, and most riotous districts of that once extensive government of Bolivar.

On my arrival, and anchoring in the wide bay, intelligence was conveyed to the town that a British man-of-war had made her welcome appearance ; and the day following I received all manner of intelligence concerning predicted revolutions and certain murders. I was requested to try every means to cross the bar, and get the ship within shot of the town. The merchants imagined that plunder and destruction were at hand, and finished their numerous complaints by naming the birthday of the president, as the time fixed for the riots. At the distance the shallowness of the water had forced me to anchor, I might as well have been at Gibraltar ; for, in point of affording assistance, I could not even communicate with the town, if the fretful disposition of Colonel Castelli, who commanded the fort of St. Carlos, opposed my views. The revolution was almost certain : plunder and murder would inevitably follow ; and, taking this view of the case, I resolved to hazard the loss of the ship, rather than remain an idle spectator of the mischief.

There are many times in a sailor's life when his discretionary judgment may supersede his orders. I am no particular admirer of the strict observance of all rules, so conspicuously exemplified in the case of a marine who was sentinel on the forecastle of the *Ajax* when she was burnt off the island of Tenedos. When his shipmates urged him to jump overboard, and save himself by swimming to the boats, and when the flames were bursting around him, or flying up the tarred rigging in fearful rapidity, the soldier replied, — “ that he could not leave his post until he was properly relieved by the corporal.” He was relieved by a sterner corporal, and forfeited his life by the observance of his orders.

As crossing this bar was by no means an easy task, and certainly a very dangerous one, I took care not to leave any thing to fortune. The master was despatched and succeeded, after much trouble, in finding a zig-zag entrance, over which was about twelve feet water at the highest of the tide. The channel was buoyed, and the ship trimmed,

so as to make her on an even keel fore and aft: the stream-anchor was towed a long way astern, and the officer in the boat had directions to let it go on a given signal; so that if the ship touched and could not be forced over the bar, we had an anchor ready to heave us off. We weighed at nine o'clock, and stood with a light breeze towards the supposed entrance. The leadsman soon began to call — "a quarter less four," — then — "by the deep four," — and "a half three," — "by the mark three," — and "a quarter two." I kept my resolution and my countenance very well until the last call, when I began to waver in my determination; but before I could consult even myself, the ship gently struck, and remained immovable. The stream-anchor was immediately let go from the boat astern, the sails were furled, and the cable brought to the capstan; but no one can fancy my annoyance when the anchor was hove up without even checking the capstan, and I discovered the bar to be a quicksand — consequently the more dangerous, as it afforded no hold for an anchor.

Whenever a man stumbles into debt, he stumbles into a quagmire; the more he struggles, the deeper he sinks; and very few, who, led by the Will-o'-the-wisp Folly, in the garb of Fortune, have run aground on the slough of debt, have ever got perfectly clear of the mud afterwards. When Fortune sees you in distress, she very seldom comes to your assistance. This was my case: no sooner had the ship struck, the anchor been hove up, the sails furled, and we left to our own resources again, than the wind, which before had been light, began to freshen, and the sea-breeze came down with unusual force; the sea soon began to break over the bar, and the poor ship bumped with increased violence, as the sea ran higher and higher: a bower-anchor was carried out under the bottom of the cutter, she being previously supported by empty casks placed under her. This operation, carried on under the bows of a small vessel, the sea breaking, and the ship bumping, was not easily effected; and, owing to some bungling in the business, the boat was stove. The stream and kedge were laid out beyond the bower-anchor.

As the tide was ebbing we were soon left high, and

nearly dry — a monument of egregious folly, and the laughing-stock of the Spaniards, who inwardly chuckled at our forlorn situation, and who most sincerely hoped that the night would leave us in that state, that even they, cowards as they were, would be able to plunder us with impunity. The lower yards and top-mast were struck, and every thing aloft made snug. The sea now began to break over the wreck, and washed up the sand, which soon formed a bed for us. When the tide began to flow, the wind, in direct opposition to old customs, began to freshen; for in these parts, when the sun sets, the sea-breeze generally dies away, and the land-wind takes its place; but this night the sun set red and fiery, the high land was uncovered by clouds, and every thing indicated more rather than less wind. The barometer was constantly consulted; but the most sanguine drooped when the sinking mercury foretold the coming storm. About nine o'clock P.M. the ship began to strike harder and harder; and as this was the best time to effect our purpose, we began to heave her head to the sea; for she had, owing to the sudden fall of the tide, remained with her bow on. I had in vain sent boat after boat to the Fort of St. Carlos, to beg they would lend me a flat gun-boat, which could have conveyed all our stores and sick people to a place of security: the answer was — “that it blew too fresh.” The fact was, that Colonel Castelli was very anxious that the ship should be lost, in order, as he afterwards told me, that others might be deterred from hazarding the attempt, which promised to prove fatal to the forlorn hope. Had I been able to lighten the ship, I could have worked with a better hope of success.

About ten o'clock, after having toiled for an hour at the capstan, we succeeded in getting her bow round, and in heaving her pretty close to her anchor. We had the stream-cable in preparation to be brought to the capstan. The ship was afloat; and although I well knew that she would strike when the tide began to ebb, if we did not succeed in getting her further out, I felt an inward hope that we might yet save her. In making the necessary preparations before we hove the anchor a-peak, a sudden squall came whistling along the water; the bower-cable snapped like a

rotten carrot ; the ends of the stream-cable slipped through the hawse-hole ; and although the other bower-anchor was let go immediately, the ship got stern-way ; the cutter was washed away ; the stem-piece of the gig was started, and our only remaining hope, a jolly-boat, was lying with the stream-cable and a hawser, having four men and two oars on board. The ship, as the tide ebbed, remained broadside on, and the sea made a clear breach over her. The men were perfectly exhausted. At midnight we "piped down," and, notwithstanding our situation, slept pretty soundly until daylight. We had, between the snapping of the cable and the sleep, recovered the cutter, so that we had still some glimmerings of hope.

"The sun rose red and fiery — a sure sign of the continuance of the gale." The ship began to move with the flowing tide ; but the impossibility of our getting off, as we came on, was alarmingly evident. The master, a most expert and excellent seaman, expressed his conviction that nothing could be done. The carpenter declared that she must go to pieces if the sea continued to run as high as it did ; and the first lieutenant, who was busily employed in making a raft in order to save the men, was alive to the necessity of the work, or he would not have recommended it. The second lieutenant and myself were the only two who did not despair ; for although I had never been quite so perilously situated, yet I remembered that we saved the *Arethusa* in pretty nearly as bad a predicament. The sick and the boys were now sent on shore ; and some, who were destined to die in a few days, were the most active to save their lives. A small sloop was lying near the fort, and I directed the officer to seize her, and bring her for our stores ; for I well knew that if I did not forcibly avail myself of Fortune's blessings, I had no reason to hope that she would float down to my assistance of her own accord. Both services were effected ; and in spite of the Spaniard's loud curses and hectorings, we anchored her close to us, and began removing our stores.

I now determined to try a most desperate expedient ; being fully aware that I could not get the ship off, I thought of getting her further on, and allowing the sea to wash her



over the bar. It was the drowning man grasping at a straw. The order was given to prepare to throw the guns overboard, and to buoy them with a hawser, usually reckoned strong enough to weigh a bower-anchor; but previously to commencing my plan, I got the stream-anchor and cable on board. I then sprung the ship with her bow on shore; and after again hearing from all the officers their conviction that it was impossible for the ship to hold together another day in her present situation, and likewise the folly of waiting for help, or of attempting to get her off, I reluctantly, I confess, gave the order to slip the bower-cable; and when the ship had surged, with her head on shore, I cut the spring, and left her to the sea and the wind. The guns were brought aft one by one, and thrown overboard out of the stern port: this was done to prevent the possibility of the ship striking on them. The stores, such as spare sails, bread, the men's hammocks, &c., were on board the sloop; the shot were pitched after the guns; the water started, and the ship left with hardly any thing but her ballast and her tanks. Indeed, whenever the former could be got at, we soon changed its situation. Every sea that rolled by us contributed to our salvation, for it washed us further on the reef. Every bump gave me hopes; and what was considered as the height of desperation, was soon regarded as a chance. The rudder was forced from the stern-post; but before it separated from us I secured it by a strong hawser; as in towing it we impeded our miserably slow progress, I buoyed it, and cut the hawser. The fore-yard was swayed up, and the fore-sail set; although, from the violence of the shocks, I little expected the lower masts to stand. Empty casks were slung, and placed in such a manner as to support the vessel; and this last plan assisted us uncommonly; the ship neither struck so hard nor drew so much water.

It wanted an hour of the highest of the tide when we cut the spring; and now half of that had elapsed, and we had progressed but very little. Every eye was directed to some landmark; and as we shut it in with the island of the Bajo Seco, fresh hopes arose, and the chance of escape became more and more probable. The line of surf over

which we had to pass to get into the inner channel, became nearer and nearer. The ship began to strike heavier, and I only feared that there might be one rock, on which if we struck, we should have sprung a leak not easily to be remedied. At the very highest of the tide we arrived at the shoalest part. The angry waves, as they roared by us, and washed in at the gangways, were regarded as our greatest friends; for without them we must have remained a fixture and a wreck. At last she gave one tremendous bump, which shook the mast and yards with a violent tremulous motion, and surged into deep water. The fore-top-mast was on end, and the jib and boom mainsail were set to remedy the loss of the rudder. We managed by constant attention, and by towing the cutter astern, to steer pretty correctly; and before the tide had ebbed a quarter of a fathom, we were brought up by the stream-anchor under the lee of the Bajo Seco. The serf outside seemed to roar for its victim, now safe from its fury; and our anchorage (which at other times would have been reckoned but an uninteresting roadstead) was to us the safest haven we had ever known. There we were without guns or shot, anchors, or cables; no rudder, and only one available boat. Some of the men fainted from over-exertion, and all were exhausted: — we were safe. Then came the reflection how we were to get back again. We had come as unwelcome intruders, in a manner never heard of before; but it was evident we could never return the way we came.

As I had risked the ship for one great object, I resolved, the dangers and difficulties past, to carry my original resolution into effect. The day following I hired a large Spanish launch, and sent her to bring back the anchors. She returned with two guns and the small bower-anchor. The ship was immediately set to rights aloft, and at sunset we assumed a very man-of-war-like and efficient *appearance*.

The next day's fish for lost stores was not very profitable: we could only recover two guns more; all the rest were lost. The quicksand rubbed the buoy-rope so much, that it gave way directly the weight of the gun came upon it, and before we had time to sweep it away with a fresh

rope. In vain we kept the cutter creeping for the guns ; the sands soon either sunk from under them, or the eternal shifting shoal covered them for ever. In the mean time we had found the gig, and repaired her ; the carpenters had made a spare rudder ; and in this state, with only four guns and *no shot* — no, not *one* — I got under weigh, and with the assistance of a pilot, crossed the Tablasos ; and navigating the lake of Maracaibo, soon came to an anchor close under the fort of the town.

Our appearance excited as much surprise as if we were “spirits from the vasty deep.” The day following was to be one of the many revolution days ; and the property, placed for a chance security in the consul’s house, was considered as comparatively safe. In the mean time I began to look out for a rudder ; and having, in a place called a dockyard, found one belonging to an old schooner, I purchased it for the sum of sixteen dollars ; and by some little exercise of the carpenter’s talents, I found it was possible to ship it, as our gudgeons were fortunately large enough to admit its pintles. When this was shipped, and we found it worked easily, I began to think of war, and of making preparations for any untoward event. The guns were mounted on the side nearest the shore, and the other portholes were kept shut. We made very civil apologies for not showing the ship ; and, rather than show our weakness, we consented to be called uncivilised heretics ; but no sooner had the fatal day passed, without any serious interruption of the national tranquillity, than I resolved to regain my former fair fame, and issued invitations to the Captain-General Udeneta and his staff, with the principal inhabitants, to dinner.

The consul had a turtle, which lay sprawling in his courtyard, evidently at the point of death ; and I solicited permission to prevent its lingering. The sentence of death was however withheld, and the next morning — the morning of the day of my dinner — the turtle departed this life by the visitation of providence, and free from the smallest suspicion which could warrant a coroner’s inquest. We managed to make a kind of tent of the awnings, under which on the larboard side we spread a table. The En-

glish and Columbian flags were blended together, and the ship decorated with as much care, and perhaps more, than if we had been in Portsmouth harbour. We managed to fire a salute in excellent order with our four guns, and no one in the world would have suspected that we had not all our battering train on board : from the foremost part of the awnings we ran a thick screen, so that our visitors had no idea of the loss we had sustained ; and we repressed any extravagant curiosity by stating some excuse, which was quite sufficient for a well-bred Spaniard ; they being, without exception, the most gentlemanly men in the world, and always guarded not to excite suspicion, or appear capriciously curious. There were only four captains-general in Columbia, so that my visitor was a kind of prince of the blood royal, and entitled to much respect : moreover, I wished to impress him with a proper notion of my dignity. He had a very proper idea of my *determination*, for he expressed himself as anxious to see me after crossing his threshold, as he called the bar, as if I had been a wild animal newly imported.

The dinner was conducted with proper decorum. The different toasts were drunk with proper respect, and about ten o'clock the captain-general and his staff, being in very good humour, thought proper to retire. I had prepared a species of show not often seen, and only seen to perfection when the night is very dark and very clear. It consists of illuminating the ship by means of blue lights placed on each yard-arm, and then manning the yards (indeed the latter ought to be done before the lights are fired). When his excellency had left the ship and was clear of any stray wads, I fired my four guns, illuminating the ship as above mentioned, and discharged a dozen rockets at the same moment. The unexpected blaze of light and roar of guns disturbed the slumbering inhabitants, who believed the revolution broke out at last. The pale blue light which was shed on the seamen, all dressed in white, and standing with their legs extended on the lofty yards, occasionally enveloped in the coloured smoke, as it rose from the guns, was a beautiful exhibition ; whilst the rapid rockets drew behind their dazzling train of light, and burst over the

ship, forming a most magnificent rain of fire. The loud "*vivas*" from his excellency's crew, as the unexpected compliment was paid, re-echoed through the bay; and long after the men were "piped down," and the noise and the bustle over, I heard the chatter of the children, and deep voices of their parents, expressing their unabated surprise and pleasure.

"Who gives to worth receives a benefit" — a maxim I have often found correct; and although occasionally we do meet with people who cannot be courted with any degree of permanent success, yet it should be remembered by all officers employed abroad, that whatever tends to place a visitor on a prouder pinnacle amongst his countrymen, tends likewise to raise that officer in the estimation of the people. I soon found that my compliments had not been in vain; pilots were sent to sound the bar in every direction, and a channel was found of sufficient depth to allow us to get to sea in security, provided the shifting sands did not interfere. This was very pleasant intelligence, and rendered doubly pleasant from the quiet manner in which it had been conducted. I had not the slightest information of the general's desire to serve me, and I considered the ball he gave to my officers and myself quite a sufficient return for my civilities.

I became very anxious to repass the bar, and find myself again at sea: the roar of its surf haunted me in imagination, and I never slept without feeling the ship strike against the hard sand, or believing myself forced to either burn or sell her, and take the crew back to Jamaica in a schooner. As the tides advanced towards their highest state, I weighed, and the same day took up my old position, and began to place the stores and every movable article on board a small vessel lent me for the occasion.

To my very great astonishment, while we were heaving up the anchor, I saw the captain-general and all his staff coming on board. This visit, at four o'clock in the morning, I considered the very *acmé* of Spanish civility, and I wished the general and his courtesy anywhere else than on board the ship. I found, however, that I was not the person whom the great man honoured with his private conversa-

tions, but that the pilot was the favoured man. The general spoke sometimes in a whisper, sometimes in a passionate tone ; and at last, having lost all patience, he turned round and said — “ Well, if she does touch, and remains hard and fast, rest perfectly sure I will hang you ! — and now then, captain,” he resumed, “ the sooner you weigh the better ; I am going to breakfast with you *outside* of the bar.” We never touched once, although the sea was rather high, and we never had less water than thirteen feet.

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

Nor far from Santa Martha is an Indian village, called Mamatocca : it stands about three miles inland, and is approached by a sandy but shaded road ; the hedge-flowers are perfectly beautiful, and perhaps may rival the finest description of blossoms which contribute so mainly to adorn our own country.

The village is a mere straggle of huts, by which a small river rushes over its shallow bed, the shallowness being its greatest recommendation ; for if it were deep, the frequent bathers would be in considerable danger from the alligators ; whereas now they seat themselves in perfect security, and allow the stream to rush by them. But in these countries unalloyed pleasure can never be expected ; the delight experienced by cold bathing here is very considerably reduced, in consequence of a small insect, somewhat resembling a bug, which fastens on the leaves of the trees that overhang the stream : the wind forces them from their natural abodes ; and if one happens to fall upon the unconscious bather, it works its way through, or between the cuticles, and occasions a very serious eruption, which can only be cured by extracting the hidden cause. The sand-flies here are particularly annoying and irritating, leaving after their bite a small black spot, which I have known to remain for

three months, without the sufferer hazards an open sore ; an event always to be carefully avoided in tropical climates.

Mamatocca is the resort of most of the wealthy, or rather the more affluent classes of the inhabitants of Santa Martha ; the houses are indifferent as to structure, and in perfect hostility to comfort. There is a church of some small consequence, owing to the bishop of Santa Martha occasionally honouring it with his presence ; and a certain air of fashion is breathed by all who follow in the train of his reverence. It was in Mamatocca that I first saw an Indian dance, which even example, in the shape of the more graceful fandango or bolero, had not been able to alter. It consisted, in its primitive barbarity, of any number of males or females, standing in a circle, holding each other's hands, and stamping quite indiscriminately : they sung, or rather yelled forth words, which were rivalled in barbarity by the horrid and almost unnatural distortion of the countenance, the music being a worthy accompaniment to such an exhibition : it consisted of two performers ; one blew into a reed, while the other rattled some pebbles or peas in a calabash. The leading musician, whose cheeks were puffed out by his exertion to make a noise, blew one steady monotonous note, never varying excepting by the shriller sound being produced by an increased force of wind : the almost naked artist who shook the calabash, seemed to have the most sovereign contempt for any thing like time ; to produce a certain noise was the summit of his endeavours, and he most decidedly succeeded : it was altogether as wild and as inharmonious an effort of savage amusement as could be imagined. When one set were tired, or had sung out their songs, another party took their place, and howled away in equally discordant sounds : it lasted nearly the whole night.

Although the Indians remained in their primitive barbarity in regard to their dances, they have discovered the luxury of comfort in regard to their habitations ; and the *rosas* (for so their residences are called) of the Indians are an example to some, who look down with contempt on the efforts of these cultivators of the soil, in regard to neatness and elegance. The gardens are fantastically arranged ;

and, with the exception of some few, might be regarded with pleasure even by the most fastidious arranger of garden-plots. My route to the *rosas* led to a small village, called Guayra; and as no *posada* was visible, I rode to the door of the *padre*, and making my horse fast to a paling, unceremoniously entered the house, and inquired for the residence of our consul, who having been scared from Santa Martha by the yellow fever, had taken up his abode in a kind of birdcage, misnamed a house, and in which stood in solitary grandeur a grand piano.

As however the consul was not at home, I returned to the *padre*, and partook of his hospitality. He was a short, punchy, jolly divine, who so carefully attended to his duty, that he seldom in good truth lost sight of the church: he had not been absent from his miserable and ragged parishioners for fifteen years, during which time he never had walked farther than from his house to the altar and back again. His was not a solitary hearth; for although no one would be profane enough to say, in direct violation of the law of the land and his profession, that the *padre* was married, or ever violated the vow of celibacy, which he necessarily made when he took upon himself the responsible and holy office he now filled, yet it was undeniable, that a certain number of *niñas* most pertinently resembling the good father, were either soberly at work, or, as the privilege of infancy dictated, scampering about the room, whilst a very matronly personage, called an aunt, was busily bustling in order to make the frugal fare appear to better advantage, by the addition of cleanliness, in the shape of an unspotted tablecloth. The father was always called "uncle;" and for an uncle, I certainly never saw a more affectionate being: he patted his nephews and nieces on their greasy cheeks, looked with tenderness on the aunt, and quaffed his wine with most rigid regard to the law of sobriety, but with a leer of the eye which confirmed the pleasure he experienced as the "liquid ruby" pursued its course from his lips to its destination.

At the conclusion of our repast, we retired to the door of the house; and there, leaning against the palings, to which my miserable steed was fastened, I listened to the village



tales of wonder, as the *padre* smoked his cigar, and lisped out his anecdotes. We had not been long in our cool retreat before an Indian, who wore a small badge of Christianity appended to a string of beads, and who, although rather more in a state of nudity than would be allowed by the society who prosecute for indecent exposure of the person, was, nevertheless, above the common herd of these tractable savages. He made the sign of the cross to the *padre*, and gave an inclination of the head, and he saluted the stranger. After a few words with the divine, he boldly asked for the trifling loan of two reals, which, insignificant as it appears to us, was a serious sum to the pastor, who really was not overburthened with the mammon of unrighteousness, excepting in his house, and in the shape of women. The *padre* took the cigar from his mouth, and puffed out a long line of uninterrupted smoke, finishing the ejection with a palpable "whew!" then looking the Indian full in the face, and assuming an air of importance, he asked — "Did I not in May last *lend* you a real, in June three reals, in July two reals?" To this the Indian nodded assent; "and" continued the reverend divine, "are ye so ungrateful that ye never think to repay me?"

"Every morning and night," replied the artful Indian, "when I say the prayers you so kindly taught me for the salvation of my soul, I think of you, the six reals, and my God."

"Well," said the *padre*, "is it to think of God, and pray to him; but now I tell you, that if you wish your child to be baptized, I will not do it; if your wife dies, and you seek to be remarried, I will not marry you; if you are sick, I will not comfort you; and if you die, I will not bury you, until you think less of your God and more of me and my six reals:" then, replacing his cigar, he bowed a departure to the Indian.

I untied my horse from the paling; and having mounted made a low bow, saying, after the usual manner of the country, "Ponga me a los pies de las senoritas," (and many a man would have liked the request to have been put in reality in execution,) and turning from the uncharitable but hospitable divine, I retraced my steps to Mamatocca;

and after returning to Santa Martha, weighed, and ran down to Carthagena.

There are few things in life more comfortable and satisfactory than to find that, whilst we have been employed in gaining information along the path of pleasure, we have been gaining money without the slightest inconvenience, and almost without any responsibility : the conveyance of treasure by his Majesty's ships is one of the few blessings which offer a chance of affluence, or a sufficiency in after life during the time of peace : the naval service has considerable advantages over the army. The dispersion of fog may show a prize with 700,000*l.* sterling on board, within reach of the guns—and all the dusky dreariness of the decline of life, under a very limited control of money, be at once cleared away ; if in an action we are wounded, instead of being ridden over by the dragoons, or trampled upon by the firm stamp of the charging infantry, we are handed below out of the way of danger, placed in our own beds, attended almost instantly by able surgeons ; and in the enjoyment of all the attention and humanity of sailors, we recover to a state of convalescence, or are removed to hospitals on our arrival in port. We have no long nights of uncovered bivouac ; the wind which whistles over our heads, and the sea which cradles us into slumber, bring not with them the cold shiverings experienced by those who lie down to rest on the moist ground, or take up their quarters, and seek for shelter in the cover of a damp ditch ; — no forced marches — no carrying knapsack — no rough carts for the wounded — and no days of stiffened wounds without assistance ; and, what is last and worse than all, no quarters in a country town. Ours is the ever changing charming life ; all climes, all countries brought within our view, from the low wooded shores of Norway or Finland to the high and towering Andes ; from the Minâh of Constantinople to the walls of China, or the soft scenery, and almost houseless habitations of the Aleutian islands ; — all that the poets of old have made beautiful in imagination, to the wanderings of Childe Harold, and the fairy land of Wyoming, are within our grasp ; and while we see all Oriental magnificence and luxury, we are able to compare the different states and stations of men, from the gorgeous

shah to the poor drone and savage slave of the gold coast. And, thank God! some of us can relinquish our wanderings, pleased and contented with our own island, and satisfied by personal observation that the whole world cannot produce a country where more freedom exists; where the laws are so fairly, although dearly, administered; and where society, having gained its highest point of civilisation, can be more enjoyed: add to this, the liberal allowances of the government for services performed and wounds received; the constant admiration of all parties towards those who have defended their country or extended her conquests: and I cheerfully subscribe, that although ours is not perhaps the most affluent profession, and in its early stages is by no means the most luxurious or easy; yet when once the rank of captain is obtained, there cannot be its equal to a man of fair talents, with some little addition to his pay; and when old age creeps upon us, we can look back with honest pride that our lives have not been in vain. The little we got, we got honestly; and we can bear to die, having faced death in its most horrible form and fashion. Contentment, the result of an equal temper and good conscience, must be the work of a man's self; in vain we look for happiness, if every trifling accident or hasty word is to ruffle our temper or wound our pride. To be good officers, we must be good men; those who are under our command must be constantly under our observation; we must not leave to chance the exercise of undue authority in our inferiors; and absolute sovereigns as we are, we must temper justice with mercy, and must discriminate between the complainant and the offender: moreover, we must not allow our judgment to be hastily swayed, or punishment immediately to follow. All the abuse which has been so generously lavished upon us as tyrants, has arisen from the haste and indiscretion of a few; and equally unfair is it to bring forward these few as the character of the whole, as it is to condemn all the planters, because some of their overseers have been guilty of cruelty or murder.

My freights from Maracaibo and Santa Martha were proofs of the skeleton of commerce which still clung to the miserable country so often above mentioned: after every

merchant had screwed his debtor to the last turn for payment, the whole sum shipped at the former place amounted only to 4800 dollars, at the latter to 9000 dollars, and no ship had taken a freight during the space of six months; but I could not complain, for such was my good fortune, that I hardly ever sailed from a port without a freight, sometimes large, and oftener small.

Carthagera stands upon a low point of land, which projects from the base of the mountain of La Popa. The streets are narrow and paved, some of the houses of good dimensions, and the churches many, but not magnificent; in the cathedral, is an ivory pulpit of very creditable workmanship, which cost 600,000 dollars. The harbour is secure, the climate bad, the inhabitants a sickly yellow race, and the heat intolerable; but Carthagera has its wonders, and amongst these are the vampire bats. Travellers, they say, see strange sights!—what would one of this reading age say, when told that a very few years back a petition was sent to the Spanish government to stop the progress of road-making, as the men *who carried a traveller over a mountain on a chair slung to the shoulders* would starve if such marks of civilisation were permitted to exist? such however was the case!

The vampire bat is sometimes of immense size; they have been seen as large as six feet from the tip of each wing. The body is small, and resembles very nearly our own bat; they generally fix upon horses, and keep the animal in a comfortable sleep, by fanning him with their wings during the time they suck his blood. It is presumed that the pain cannot be more than that occasioned by the bite of some of the large tormenting flies, to which the horses have become accustomed; for the animal sleeps on and disregards the puncture. In the morning it is found streaming with blood, and weak from its loss. Such is the general account of these half-birds, half-beasts; and oftentimes have I seen the horses in the plight above described. I believe very few human beings have been sufferers from these intruders; there is, however, an anecdote current at Carthagera, of which the following is the substance:—

A beautiful young lady had fall a desperately in love

with a servant, who resided in the house opposite. The first advance appears to have been made in a manner which has been retailed in many novels. The lady sung to admiration; and the servant, who wanted neither taste nor voice, caught the favourite air from the warble of his mistress, and tenderly re-echoed the strain whenever his adored love broke the silence of the evening. In all Spanish houses there is a window with projecting bars, which forms a kind of narrow balcony; and it is customary for ladies, even without their duennas, to sit on the seat of the window to enjoy the cool air, and watch the passing crowds. The twirl of the fan in a peculiar manner can convey a sentiment, and the dark flash of a Spanish eye may confirm it; in fact, no people are such adepts in love as the Spanish ladies. They are, generally speaking, constant; and although the raging fire is not extinguished by its own heat, they are incapable of deception; they love or hate—

“ A generous bosom no cold medium knows,  
Burns with one love—with one resentment glows; ”

and in their manner either is discernible.

It was not long before the amorous Stefano observed a corresponding feeling in the lovely Francisca; poetry—the needle of love—conveyed the thread of passion in words adapted to the favourite air of his mistress: and she, equally lively in imagination, conveyed her own sentiments by the same conveyance. If notes were sent in the nosegays, or if the language of the flowers were resorted to, the retailers of this anecdote seem to be ignorant; so easy it is to convey an expression by artifice, that one scarcely wonders at the ingenuity of the ancient Peruvians, who communicated their ideas by variegated knots on cords. A pebble in Greece offered to a lady goes farther than the cinder, which merely implies “ I burn for you!” and there is a small hedge-flower, the blossom of which encircles the leaf, which has been chosen amongst the females of South America, as expressing all that love could wish, or tongue could tell. When the blossom dies, the leaf dies; if the leaf is blasted, the blossom withers; it is all that true love could wish, and is expressed by the fidelity of the plant.

The mutual sentiment had been conveyed—and she, whose only happiness consisted in her virtue, consented to risk its loss for the prospect of a greater enjoyment. To marry was impossible, but to intrigue was within the range of probability. The night which first witnessed the crime of Francisca was calm and beautiful; and how or by what means the lusty valet obtained admission to her chamber, is unknown; but the window was found open, and her lover flown. Before dawn, the duenna had entered the apartment, some fearful dream having scared her from repose. The rays of the moon fell on the bed of the ruined maid, and there, fixed on the bosom of the cold and inanimate form, was seen a large and savage vampire; the dusky darkness of its wings, as they cooled the air, contrasted strongly with the marble whiteness of the form below—the emblem of sin on the bosom of chastity. The lips were blanched and open; the eyes were closed; and the blood which the greedy mouth was unable to contain, ran in a rapid stream along the corpse. It was too evident what had happened; the aperture which facilitated the escape of the seducer afforded an entrance for her murderer; but if she died a hasty martyr to her grief—if sudden fright deprived her of life—or if the vampire bite had opened an artery, remains, like the anecdote, in doubtful obscurity; but the narrators affirm that the body of Stefano was found tossing about in the breakers of Salmadina—a shoal a few miles distant from the Bocca Chica, thus enhancing the value of the wondrous anecdote; for Stefano's love must have turned into a dolphin, and borne him on its back, like a second Arion, against the force of the trade-winds, and the rapidity of the constant current.

My time had arrived for a departure from the West-India station; and shortly after I left Carthagena, I was at anchor off the bar of Tampico.

Tampico is a small town which stands upon the bank of the river of the same name; and which, from the security of its harbour for those vessels which can pass the bar, is likely to become of considerable importance to the state of Mexico. It is situated about two hundred miles from Vera Cruz. Formerly Pueblo Viejo engrossed the trade of these

parts ; but the outset from the lake of Tampico having blocked up the branch of the river, which afforded a navigable communication with the town, the new village of Tamaulipas has taken its place in regard to commerce, and bids fair to be a flourishing city.

The yellow fever was making fearful ravages here, and the want of medical assistance was seriously felt by the inhabitants. It is strange to witness the determined belief in predestination among the poorer and savage classes. An Indian, when attacked by yellow fever, lies down under the porticoes which face the river, between the landing-place and the custom-house : from the moment of sickness no assistance is rendered. " If he is to die," say his companions, " God's will be done : if not, he will recover without human aid." By the side of the sufferer groups of gamblers will be seen sitting in a circle and risking their little at *monté*. Great indeed is the difference, and stupidly indifferent must the stranger be who could pass such a scene unmoved ; the contrast between the lively eye of hope in the gambler, and the inflamed and dull look of the fevered man, would strike the most listless observer : the long sigh of suffering is awfully contrasted with the hasty dispute which, owing to the cheating propensities of the banker, too often occurs. In vain the poor panting sufferer calls for water, which he sees running its rapid course not ten yards from his resting-place ; the gambler heeds not the cry, his look is fixed upon the coming card, his eye is riveted on the dealer's hand, and the sick and the dying apply to him in vain. Like the weary traveller over the sandy desert, the mirage mocks him and vanishes as he approaches ; so the poor Indian stretched upon the ground, and only occasionally sheltered from the glare of the burning sun, sees beneath his feet the cool water, for which he pants to lave his burning mouth, pass by almost within his reach, and dies for the want of that which the strength of a moment of his former life might easily have procured. He dies : the same unfeeling disregard follows his death ; no one will remove him, because it has suited the convenience of priestcraft to make the credulous Indian believe, that if the body is touched before the church is remunerated for

the funeral, the dead will revive in the form of a witch, and those who dared to remove the body will be for ever subject to the haunts and caprices of the superhuman being. A woman was attacked with fever, and laid herself down to die before the door of a Mr. Bertrand, a merchant; and there she died. Mr. Bertrand, knowing the superstitions of the Indians, went immediately to the priest, and begged that the body might be removed: the answer was, "As soon as I receive my fee I will order the corpse to be buried." Hurt at seeing the ministers of religion only anxious to cater for themselves, Mr. Bertrand endeavoured to bribe a group of gamblers to remove the body, for the sun was powerful, and a few hours would have produced all the disagreeable consequences of putrefaction. Not one would do the deed; the woman had died without confession, and to touch her was fatal to their future happiness: they refused even to remove the corpse from before the door; and, after having vainly endeavoured to gain his end, Mr. Bertrand, to avoid a pestilential vapour which already began to arise from the body, paid a fee of twelve dollars. The holy man arrived, and whispered into the ear of the corpse; the Indians cheerfully removed her; the fear of the witch was subdued by the priest, and the old woman received Christian burial.

Amongst the higher classes it is customary, when Death has overtaken his prey, to dress the corpse in the best apparel which belonged to it formerly. A Mr. Brown, who had striven with some hope against the yellow fever, resigned the unequal contest and died. I went to see the ceremony. The body was dressed as if for a ball,—silk stockings, pumps, a neat cravat, new gloves, &c., and, thus equipped, was placed in his coffin and buried. The Indians, alive to honesty in the large way (for I have seen twenty or thirty thousand dollars left unprotected in a house, through which numerous Indians passed, and yet not one was filched), are desperately bold in dishonesty for a trifling sum. It is their belief, that every foreigner who dies in Tamaulipas has, buried with him, a sufficient sum of money to bribe an angel to convey him to his native land; and having frequently witnessed the fact of dressing out the



body as if for a dance, they more willingly persuade themselves that their conjectures are right.

No sooner was Mr. Brown interred, and night shaded the depredators, than these resurrection men opened the grave and the coffin, despoiled the corpse of its useless apparel, dragged it from its repose, and left it on the bank of the river. In the morning the disgusting sight was seen; hundreds of crows battled with the dogs for their prey, "growling and gorging o'er carcass and limb," the hungry dog disputed the right with the savage bird; and long and doubtful would have been the result, had not an alligator landed near the spot; and, walking off with the body, disappeared in the mud of the river. It may be easily imagined, that in a small community like that of Tamau-lipas, the knowledge of the end of Mr. Brown excited the horror and disgust of those who were, in all probability, destined soon to follow him; but the Indians continue in their belief, that there can be no sin in robbing a dead heretic—nay, they are even commended for the act; and many a laugh was raised as the gallant bearing of the alligator was commented on. It is said that tigers which have tasted human blood, are more desperately savage than those that live on other food: the same may apply to alligators. I was an eye-witness to the desperate ferocity of one. A poor old woman was washing some linen close to the landing-place. She was not deeper than her knees, and accounted herself in perfect security, from the noise she made, and the known general timidity of either shark or alligator. We saw an alligator cruising about at a little distance, and warned the old woman of her neighbour. She laughed, and replied that they were never known to come in water discoloured by soap, and continued her avocation. About five minutes afterwards, she gave a loud shriek, and we saw her carried under the water, never to rise again. It was a desperate example, but quite disregarded; for the next day the women washed, as usual, in the same place, and went to work with all the coolness of predestinarians.

It has been the fashion lately to reduce the salaries of the consuls and vice-consuls: but, to enable a man to pass life

in any creditable manner at Tamaulipas, the sum ought to have been increased rather than diminished ; for no pay could compensate a man of any liberal education, for the mortifications he must experience in this wretched village, shut out from all society, and left almost alone in the world. The house of our vice-consul was wretchedly furnished ; in fact, it had no furniture. The consul, as if determined to shroud himself in the flag he represented, had the English ensign for bed-curtains. The house only contained two rooms ; and the scorpions frisked about the white-washed walls, as if they were the legal owners of the abode.

As in hot climates two in a bed, or two in a room, are alike disagreeable, I took up my abode with Mr. Robinson, the consul for the United States, and had a cot hung up in his long room. The kindness and hospitality of this gentleman I can never repay ; his attention to the English has not been confined to me. When that unfortunate man, Captain Charles Thurlow Smith, so foolishly relinquished our service, to enlist under the tri-coloured rag of Mexico for the allurements of gain, and was by this act, in conformity with the Foreign Enlistment Bill, erased from the list of captains, and deprived of the benefits of a British subject abroad, he little dreamed of the desperate stake he was about to play. The government soon discontinued his pay, which was nominally at five thousand pounds sterling per annum ; and Smith, by way of forcing them to some remuneration, went to Mexico. He was received by all with courtesy, but could obtain no money. He was then, in proportion to his urgent requests, censured for being absent, without leave, from Vera Cruz. In a fit of desperation he resigned his command, and the resignation was cheerfully accepted. He now became a pauper and applied to Mr. O'Gorman, the consul-general at Mexico, and I believe that gentleman relieved his wants from his private purse ; but, after numerous applications and disappointments, he wandered from place to place, until he arrived at Tampico. There he was taken suddenly ill, and died ; and his corpse remained unburied, until Mr. Robinson caused him to be interred at his own expense ; and thus the relation of one of our most gallant officers, a man who had served his own

country with zeal and assiduity, was buried by a foreigner, and his family are indebted to Mr. Robinson for rescuing his body from insult, and supplying it with a grave.

After a tedious delay of sixty days, the welcome *conducta* at last arrived. Now all was animation ; the mules came trotting into the town, rattling the money-bags as they stepped along : the chink of the dollars made ample amends for the previous stillness of the town, and the wealth of Mexico seemed spread open to our view. In every house the clerks were employed counting out the freight ; and, after a further delay of eight-and-forty hours, I was under weigh for the Havannah, having received on board 350,000 dollars, making, with the cochineal and treasure shipped at Vera Cruz, about 500,000.

Our passage across the Gulf of Mexico was prosperous, and the Island of Cuba was in sight when an unusual calm occurred. The sky was clear, the weather fine, and the barometer alone gave indications of a sudden change. We were near the spot by the bearing where the unfortunate Magpie was upset, and I anticipated some misfortune by sympathy. The sky was suddenly overcast, a small drizzling rain began to fall, and a light air from the north-west sprung up. This was a fair wind, and we were preparing to avail ourselves of the blessing, when the horizon seemed bounded in every direction by dark and suspicious clouds. We appeared inclosed as if in a hoop. The barometer, which had suddenly risen, now began to fall ; and I, aware that these unusual signs were generally the forewarners of a hurricane, turned the hands up, furled every thing, struck the top-gallant yards and masts, doubly secured the boats on the quarters, and made every thing snug for a gale. We were kept half an hour in this painful suspense. Whichever way we turned, in that direction the wind appeared to be coming ; the water in the distance seemed one stream of foam ; and yet we lay in the centre of the circle perfectly becalmed.

At last, on it came, whence, nobody could tell ; it seemed to come on all quarters at the same moment, and the poor little brig was turned and twisted about to every point of the compass. Not a stitch of canvass was set ; the

howl of the wind was terrific. The boats on the quarters shook and trembled, like a man with the ague; and the rain was more like a water-spout than separate drops. At last the wind began to range from north to north-east, and then suddenly shifted to east-south-east, at which it remained steadily until the next day, when the gale broke. It is as perfectly impossible to give a description of a hurricane, as it is to draw a picture of Paradise, and give us an idea of celestial enjoyments. I may say with Lord Byron —

“ ——— Could I wreak  
My thoughts upon expressions, and thus throw  
Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings, strong or weak,  
All that I would have sought, and all I seek,  
Bear, know, feel, and yet breathe into one word,  
And that one word were lightning, I would speak.”

If for *lightning* the word *wind* is imagined, a hurricane might be half-expressed.

My stay at the Havannah was short. I was already tired of the station. The first sum of my future fortune was under my own protection; the sickly season had extended itself even to the hurricane months; and for the first time, I began to think of the chance of dying before I saw my home again. The preparations for the voyage homeward were quickly made; and I experienced an indescribable pleasure, when, after having cleared the Gulf of Florida, I felt the long roll of the Atlantic Sea. Every day brought with it a welcome and increased coolness, until we reached the banks of Newfoundland; then came a fall of snow. The men handled the deep-sea lead-line with feminine caution; and when the wet rope passed through their hands, as the lead was hauled up, they seemed to wrinkle over the face, like monkeys in a frost. Thirteen days after we struck soundings on the Newfoundland bank, we were at anchor at Spithead, the freight safely landed, and the ship ordered to be paid off.

My return home was not with that pleasure which is unalloyed. I had lost my mother—she lived to a fair and full age, and died without much pain, after having lingered some months. To me the home which always welcomed me was now deprived of its greatest charm. My father had

fallen into the sere—the yellow leaf of life, and the winds of winter seemed likely to blow him to the earth. All of tenderness and affection had gone. The desolation of the drawing-room struck me forcibly; and the only satisfaction yet in store was to pay the last respects to the tomb of my parent, and to inscribe one verse to her memory, which could not be said “to lie like an epitaph.”

Hitherto my life had been prosperous. I had risen in a profession I dearly loved. I had escaped unwounded, although closely engaged thirty times. I had visited places generally beyond the reach of others in employment: and I had made my life pass in easy contentment, in affluence, and in pleasure. I had dined with the Grand Vizier, and waltzed with the celebrated Paez—eaten the kabobs in Constantinople, and feasted in the palace of Montezuma; and now that the pleasures of the service were over, I resigned myself with patient hope for future employment, to the occupations of a half-pay officer.

I now take my leave, with the hope that some of the clouds of life which threatened to darken my existence may be blown away, and that a life begun in pleasure may be ended in contentment and enjoyment

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